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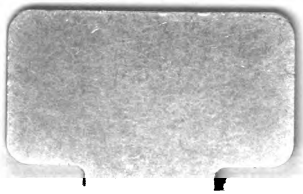
PART III.

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TO KNOWLEDGE.

Nº. XXI.

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ON THE

STATE OF MAN SUBSEQUENT

TO THE PROMULGATION

OF CHRISTIANITY

PART III.



LONDON
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THE work of which the third part is now presented to the public was begun and has been continued under the pressure both of illness and of sorrow; often written in the solitude of a sick chamber, of which it was the only solace, and often with a doubt whether time and strength sufficient to finish it would be granted. My readers will not therefore wonder, if, after having reached the middle of my task, I pause a short time to take breath and rest, after so much of close application, under circumstances which render it doubly fatiguing. A year hence, however, if health permit, I shall hope to bring out another part; for the

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favour with which it has been received seems to demand that I should not relinquish the work until either it or my life is brought to a conclusion.

In what I have written I have no party views: I have merely endeavoured to state what *is true;* though amid so much conflicting testimony I can hardly flatter myself that I have never been in error. The narrow limits of the work have imposed on me too the necessity of suppressing, in many instances, much of the testimony on which I have founded my opinion as to the truth of facts, so that I have laid before my readers conclusions rather than arguments. I have done my best by patient investigation to render them correct, but as I lay no claim to infallibility, I advise all who have the means to do as I have done, i. e. go to the original sources and judge for themselves. The uncharitable differences which are the opprobrium

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of Christians would not be so frequent were this more generally done. Nothing would induce me to enter upon controversy: it is the bane of Christian meekness:—to critics and objectors, therefore, I shall only say that whatever it may be that I have stated, I have done so knowingly and advisedly, upon testimony which appeared to me at least probable and consistent. The task is one which requires courage no less than caution; for amid hotly contending parties it is not always that the calm representations of one resolved to tell "the whole truth" are borne with patience by the belligerents. To such I can only say, that while setting down the facts as I have found them in history, and seeking the real causes of action in philosophical reasoning, I have never for a moment allowed myself to be turned to the right or the left by any consideration as to what party my statements might

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please or displease. Where there are differences there must be a certain portion of error; and wherever, and on whatever side I have seen it, I have pointed it out without rancour and without favour: it is not in the quiet of a sick room that such feelings can find place. The public has given its verdict already;—I can only hope that as I proceed I may justify it.

May 15, 1852.



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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

A. D.	
602	PHOCAS is elected emperor.
603	Chosroes, king of Persia invades the Roman empire.
609	Mohammed preaches at Mecca, being then forty years of age. He is opposed by the Koreish.
610	Phocas is dethroned and put to death by HERACLIUS, who solicits peace from Chosroes, but is refused.
611	Chosroes conquers Syria,
614	Palestine,
618	Egypt, and Asia Minor.
622	Mohammed flies from Mecca. This year begins the æra of the Hegira, or flight to Medina. Heraclius invades Persia, and defeats Chosroes.
623	Mohammed subdues the Jews of Arabia.
628	Chosroes is deposed and murdered by his son Siroes.
629	Mecca submits to Mohammed. Arabia is conquered by him in the course of the three following years. Monothelite controversy among the Greeks.
632	Mohammed dies, and is succeeded by Abu Bekr, who immediately invades Syria and Persia.
633	Battle of Aiznadin, in which the imperial forces are defeated.

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A. D.	
634	Omar succeeds Abu Bekr as caliph.
636	Jerusalem is taken by the Moslems.
638	Invasion of Egypt by Amrou.
639	The Ecthesis published.
641	Constantinus III. emperor.
642	Constans II. emperor.
644	Othman, caliph.
647	Africa is invaded by Abdallah, the Moslem general.
648	The Type of Constans is published.
650	The Sclavi overrun Italy, but are driven out again by the Lombards.
653	The Musselmans ravage Armenia. The Danes invade and ravage Britain.
655	Ali, caliph.
658	The Saracens agree to pay tribute to the Emperor.
660	The Paulicians make converts.
661	Moawiyah, caliph. The emperor Constans visits Rome.
668	Constantinus IV. Pogonatus, emperor. First attack of Constantinople by the Saracens.
669	The Saracens ravage Sicily.
680	681. Second Council of Constantinople.
685	Justinianus II. emperor.
698	Carthage conquered by the Saracens.
709	Spain invaded by the Saracens.
711	Philippicus, emperor.
713	Anastasius, emperor. The conquest of Spain by the Saracens completed.
716	Theodosius III. emperor. Second siege of Constantinople by the Saracens.
718	Leo III. the Isaurian, emperor.
721	Invasion of Gaul by the Saracens.
732	Their defeat by Charles Martel.
741	Constantinus V. Copronymus, emperor.
744	The monastery of Fulda founded by the missionary Winfred (S. Boniface.)
747	The emperor forbids the use of images.
750	The dynasty of Ommiyeh ceases to reign in

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A. D.	
	Arabia, and the Caliphate passes to the Abassides.
752	Pepin is crowned king of France. Rome is attacked by the Lombards.
754	Rome is delivered by Pepin.
755	Revolt of Spain, and division of the Saracen power.
768	Charles, afterwards known as Charlemagne, succeeds his father Pepin.
774	Lombardy is conquered by Charlemagne.
775	Leo IV. emperor.
780	Constantinus VI. and Irene, emperor and empress.
787	Second Council of Nikæa, in which image worship is enjoined.
794	Charlemagne assembles a council at Frankfort, when image worship is condemned.
800	Charlemagne is crowned Emperor of the West.
801	He receives an embassy from the Caliph Haroun al Raschid, together with the keys of the holy sepulchre.
802	Nicephorus I. Emperor of the East.
811	Stauracius, E. emperor. Michael I. E. emperor.
813	Leo V. the Armenian, E. emperor. The decree against the use of images is revived and enforced.
814	Charlemagne dies. Louis le debonnair succeeds him as Emperor of the West.
820	Michael II. E. emperor. The Bulgarians receive Christianity.
823	Crete subdued by the Saracens.
826	Prince Harold and other Northmen receive baptism at Mentz and take two monks with them to Jutland to preach to the people. One of them, Ansgar, proceeds to Sweden.
827	The Saracens invade Sicily.
829	Theophilus E. emperor.
842	Michael III. E. emperor. Image worship is restored by a synod at Constantinople.

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A. D.	
843	The Danes or Northmen invade France, and pillage and burn Rouen and Nantes.
845	Revolt of the persecuted Paulicians.
846	The Saracens besiege Rome.
853	The Northmen take and pillage Tours.
856	Judith, daughter of Charles the bald of France, is married to Ethelwulph of England. The Northmen pillage Paris.
867	BASIL, the Macedonian, E. emperor.
871	Alfred succeeds to the throne of Wessex.
880	LEO VI. the philosopher, E. emperor.
883	Alfred sends an embassy to India.
900	Alfred dies.
911	Rollo, the leader of the Northmen, accepts a fief in France.
912	He is baptized.
917	The Hungarians ravage Germany.
919	HENRY I. the Fowler, is elected to the empire.
924	The Hungarians invade Italy. They are defeated near Narbonne.
932	Henry the Fowler defeats the Hungarians with immense slaughter.
936	He dies on his way to Rome, and is succeeded by his son OTHO I., who is crowned emperor at Aix la Chapelle.
955	Olga, the widow of the sovereign of Russia, receives baptism.
962	Otho is crowned emperor at Rome, and the pope, John XII. agrees to make the election to the holy see in future in presence of the emperor's ambassador, to ensure decency and order; but
963	having failed in allegiance to the emperor, Otho returns, calls a synod, and brings him to trial for his scandalous life. He is deposed, and Leo VIII. elected pope in his stead by the unanimous voice of the synod.
975	OTHO II. succeeds his father.
979	The Romans rebel. Otho marches thither, and chastises the authors of the revolt; but dies at Rome.

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A. D.	
983	Otho III. then only twelve years old, succeeds his father.
987	Hugh Capet is crowned king of France.
988	Woladomir of Russia embraces christianity, and pulls down the idols.
996	Hugh Capet dies, and his son Robert succeeds without any form of election.
997	Insurrection of the peasantry in Normandy.
999	The learned Gerbert is raised to the papacy, under the name of Sylvester II. He begins to call the attention of christians to the defence of the holy sepulchre.
1002	Ethelred the unready, orders all the Danes in England to be put to death on the day before St. Brice's. Death of Otho III. and accession of Henry II.
1003	Sweyn lands in England to revenge his countrymen.
1009	Destruction of the holy sepulchre by Caliph Hakem. The Jews being accused of having procured it, are put to death throughout France.
1016	Canute the Dane chosen King of England. Robert king of France makes a pilgrimage to Rome. The Normans gain a footing in Calabria.
1022	Heretics condemned by the Council of Orleans are burnt.
1024	Henry II. W. emperor dies. Conrad II. succeeds.
1028	Robert the magnificent, father of William the Conqueror, becomes duke of Normandy.
1030	The Normans build Aversa in Calabria.
1035	Harold Harefoot succeeds his father Canute in England. "The peace of God" is preached in France, &c.
1039	Henry III. W. emperor succeeds Conrad II.
1040	Hardicanute succeeds his brother Harold in England.
1041	The term "*Truce*" is substituted for "*peace*

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A. D.	
	of God." It lasted during a part of the week only.
1042	Edward, the son of Ethelred, and of Emma, daughter of Richard III. duke of Normandy, succeeds to the throne of England.
1045	Council of Reims against simony, presided over by pope Leo IX.
1047	Raoul Glaber finishes his history.
1050	The writings of Aristotelis are introduced into the schools of France from an Arabic version.
1053	Pope Leo IX. is captured by the Normans in Calabria, and grants them their conquests as a fief of the see of Rome.
1056	Henry IV. W. emperor succeeds Henry III.
1059	Pope Nicholas II. founds the aristocracy of the Romish Church, by forming the Cardinals into an electoral college. Married priests are persecuted.
1060	Henry I. of France dies: his son Philip, a minor, succeeds.
1064	Pilgrimage of 7000 armed knights to the Holy Land.
1066	Edward of England dies. William of Normandy defeats Harold, and reigns in his stead.
1070	The citizens of Mans associate for their own defence, and form the first commune; compelling the nobles to join them.
1071	Sicily conquered by the Normans of Calabria.
1073	Hildebrand elected to the papacy, under the name of Gregory VII.
1076	Henry IV. of Germany does penance at Rome.
1080	Henry causes Clement III. to be elected pope, and
1081	he defeats and slays his competitor Rodolph; and besieges Rome. Robert Guiscard the Norman duke of Calabria, invades Greece
1084	Robert Guiscard rescues Gregory VII. who returns with him to Salerno.

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A. D.	
1085	Gregory VII. dies; also Robert Guiscard.
1087	William I. of England dies.
1091	Urban II elected pope by one party.
1092	Philip I. of France abandons his wife Bertha, and seduces Bertrada wife of Foulques le Rechin.
1093	Conrad rebels against his father Henry IV. of Germany, and is crowned king of Italy by Urban's consent.
1094	16 October. National Council of Autun, in which Philip I. is excommunicated. Peter the hermit begins to preach.
1095	1 March. Council of Placentia, to take cognizance of the charges against Philip I. and Henry IV. The ambassadors of the Greek emperor ask aid against the Saracens. The meeting is adjourned to Clermont.

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ON THE STATE OF MAN SUBSEQUENT TO THE PROMULGATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

PART III.

Introduction.

DURING more than a thousand years the name of Rome had been a terror to the world;—the opening of the seventh century saw that mighty empire dismembered, its proud metropolis in ruins,* and the only remnant of imperial power in the hands of a Christian bishop, who had planted the cross of the despised Galilæan above the trophies of the Cæsars. The senate, the consuls, the whole government of

* During the last siege of Rome by Totila, the commandant of the troops within the city ordered corn to be sown within the walls, to avoid the danger of being reduced by famine: Procop. Bell. Goth. lib. iii. c. 36. What must have been the previous desolation of the city!

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Rome was at an end, and the city itself was held in doubtful allegiance to the Greek Empire by the imperial deputy, who neither resided at, nor took his title from the ancient metropolis. The exarch of Ravenna held Rome as a dependent Duchy, together with Venice and Naples; but little was done by this imperial representative for the benefit of the countries he presided over. The rest of Italy was possessed by the Lombards; while the Franks, the Goths, the Avars, the Saxons, and other barbarian nations held the remainder of what had once formed the Western Roman Empire. Some had adopted Christianity and with it a certain civilisation, though still barbarous enough;* others, fresh from their roving life, shrunk from even the shadow of restraint, and exercised on the miserable inhabitants all the cruelties which their fierce superstition authorized and encouraged. Every

* The Lombards, like the Dahomans of the present time, seem to have prided themselves on possessing the skulls of their enemies. Alboin king of the Lombards was put to death at the instigation of his wife, in revenge for having been required by him to pledge him in a draught of wine from the skull of her father, whom he had slain in battle.

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where was blood and devastation, and those might think themselves happy in whose lands some barbarian tribe, strong enough to defend its territory, had established a permanent residence.

A murderous war, in which the struggle is for existence, is generally unfavourable to literature; at least if the contest be prolonged; and consequently, at this time, latin had become so debased by barbarisms that it would scarcely have been intelligible to the writers of the reign of Augustus; while, even among the Greeks, the schools of learning produced nothing worthy of their ancient fame. The histories written at this period are filled with improbable miracles and ill substantiated facts; and the title which has been given to the period we are now entering upon, of "the dark ages," cannot be considered as unmerited.

Even Christianity itself had so far degenerated, that its superstitions were nearly as gross as those which it superseded: the saints and martyrs received as much of divine homage as the heathens had been accustomed to pay to their tutelary deities; and as, very frequently, this homage was paid at the same time and

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place, and with many of the rites formerly consecrated to those deities,* it is not wonderful that the rude people, who thus only changed the name of the holiday, looked on it much in the same light as formerly. Even to this day the keeping of Christmas, the Epiphany, and other feast days of the church, has a large share of heathen rites attached to it. Thus the simplicity of worship which Christ had restored was again lost: the Christian churches, whether greek or latin, were as gorgeous in their decorations and ceremonial as the temples of the ancient nations, and the "worship in spirit and in truth," which ought to have distinguished the

* Pope Gregory in his directions to Augustine, the missionary of the Anglo-Saxons, gives him leave to convert the temples of the heathen into churches: "and because they have been used to slaughter many oxen in the sacrifices to devils, some solemnity must be exchanged for them on this account; as that on the day of the dedication, or the nativities of the holy martyrs, whose relics are there deposited. They may build themselves huts of the boughs of trees about those churches which have been turned to that use from temples, and celebrate the solemnity with religious feasting, and no more offer beasts to the Devil, but kill cattle to the praise of God in their eating." Bed. Hist. Ecc. lib. i. c. 31.

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Christian, was crushed under a load of formal observances which had nothing of spirit, and very little of truth. The laborious singing of psalms and repeating of prayers during many hours by persons set apart for that business, at which the convert was present, not assisting, took the place of that mental communion with God which was intended alike to sanctify our business and our pleasure, and was equally inefficacious both for the hearers and the repeaters. To the hearers it was generally inefficacious, because few of the barbarians understood the latin or greek tongues, and we do not find that the example of Ulphilas,—who invented a set of letters for his converts, and translated the gospels for their use,—was followed by any other preacher to heathen nations till very lately. To the repeaters of these liturgies they were inefficacious, because frequent repetition had worn out the feeling of devotion in the prayers, and attention to notation prevented it in the psalms.

In the frontier provinces of the empire the inhabitants had relapsed into barbarism: probably so many Romans had been slaughtered that their places had gradually been filled up by the borderers. The north of Asia and the north of Germany were still inhabited by rude heathen

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tribes, ready, at the call of any chief, to sally forth from their own wild country to seek riches in the more cultivated south and west. The princes of India and China held their ground, sometimes with difficulty, against the nomade and hill tribes of the north; and Persia had recovered a power which had more than once humbled the eastern empire. In Africa Christianity had reached into Abyssinia, but had suffered the deterioration which all established systems seem destined to experience from the mixture of human passions and follies which soon creep in when any advantage is to be gained by professing a peculiar faith.* In the Greek empire of the East all was rottenness beneath exterior pomp. Fierce and interminable disputes on points of abstract belief made religion a system of warfare, which did nothing towards mending the heart and life; in the midst of the din of captious disputation, the practical use and true feeling of Christianity was lost, and if holiness of life were ever thought of, it was supposed to

* Christianity is still *professed* in Abyssinia; but if recent travellers are to be credited, it has now degenerated into a ceremonial superstition. The precepts of the Teacher are overlooked, though his name is honoured.

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be practicable only within the walls of a monastery; or, at any rate, was held to consist in pursuing a course of ascetic mortifications. Those therefore, whose business or whose taste made this undesirable, were called, and considered themselves to be *worldly*, and thinking a holy life beyond their reach, abandoned themselves to the diversions,* the frivolities, and the vices of their time without scruple. The public money was wasted on the eunuchs and flatterers of the emperors, and the complaints of the people seldom gained attention, till either an insurrection was imminent, or the *millionaire* had amassed enough to make his property worth the confiscation; and then, perhaps, the empress, or some new favourite, suggested that the mal-practices of the minister were endangering his master; and thereupon sentence of death was frequently given without even a form of trial. The armies of the empire were recruited from the Heruli, the Huns, and other tribes who fought for plun-

* Who has not heard of the factions of the circus, which from the colours worn by the charioteers, or jockeys, as we should have called them, were termed "the blue" and "the green," which more than once deluged Constantinople with blood, and led to excesses hardly surpassed by an invading army.

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der, for their own honour, or for the mere barbarian love of warfare; but of men who were ready to encounter danger to defend their hearths and their altars, there were so few, that when the Bulgarians and Sclavonians approached Constantinople, A.D. 551, with an army, or rather a savage horde of no more than seven thousand men, the emperor trembled on his throne, and nothing but the genius of Belisarius could have saved the metropolis; for he led out only *three hundred* fighting men against the enemy! Such was the miserable weakness of this once powerful empire.

In proportion as the civil power became weaker, the ecclesiastical grew stronger. The sacerdotal body had in it all the elements of a strong government; and the people, with the natural instinct of the weak, clung to those who were best able to protect them. The unity of purpose which impelled this body, the secrecy resulting from the writing and speaking a language of which the barbarians were ignorant, as well as the possession of whatever learning yet survived the downfal of Athens and Rome, gave the priesthood of the Western church a power unknown before; and even the worst christian teacher had learned something more of feeling

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for his fellow men than the fierce rulers of the Franks, Lombards, &c. whose profession of the christian faith was for the most part only nominal, and who yielded, when they did yield, rather to a feeling of superstitious dread, than to the mild precepts of Christ. Thus, in their distress, the people applied to their bishop oftener than their prince; for it was generally with more success; and the weakness of the empire and the barbarism of its invaders, alike contributed to build up that ecclesiastical monarchy which so long ruled the christian world.

Nothing gives a deeper impression of the utter barbarism every where prevalent, than the *animalised* state of religion so apparent in the habits and writings of the time. The discussions on the nature of the Deity all show an incapacity for the comprehension of a spiritual existence: and the observances of the so-called religious orders were mere bodily homage, and had small influence over the heart. The grossness of the questions mooted by the *Saints* of this period is such, that their works can hardly be read without disgust; and the furious language of controversialists shows yet farther that the faith of Christ was dead, and however its remains might be embalmed and preserved from

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decay, the spirit which had once animated the Christian was gone.

Slavery was still prevalent; witness the slave market at Rome in the time of Gregory the Great; to this was added, in many cases, the serfdom of the conquered inhabitants. These serfs however held it an act of oppression when they were removed from the estates where they had been wont to live; and when, about A. D. 584, Chilperic king of the Franks gave his daughter in marriage to a Spanish Prince, and wished to send with her a considerable number of serfs as attendants, they wept and refused to go. Several strangled themselves rather than be separated from their relations and friends: others, of a higher rank, who were also required to attend on the princess, made their wills before their departure, and made the church their heir, reckoning the decease of the testator to have taken place at the moment of entering the Spanish territory.* In Gaul, the form of selling an estate usually was, with its houses, their inhabitants, and the slaves; which last, however, were sometimes sold separately. The power of reducing free men to slavery in payment of debt

* Greg. Turon. lib. vi. c. 45.

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still continued; and we find that in Gaul at least, at the end of the sixth century, the number of free proprietors as compared with the slaves, was very small. *

It is one of the griefs of the writer who wishes to give his readers any notion of the state of the people at large, that it can only be inferred from events. No historian has told us how the masses lived and died; and it is only from a few chance notices like those mentioned above, that we gather the general state of the population. Some curious facts relating to this subject have been collected by Mr. Sharon Turner in his history of the Anglo-Saxons: the book is easily attainable, and those who are curious to know the state of civilisation of their ancestors will find it in Book viii. of that work: but it relates to a period somewhat later than that of which we are now treating.

The utter ignorance of letters to which the larger part of the population was condemned by the difficulty of obtaining books, necessarily favoured superstition. The lore of the village consisted of the recollections of the elders, who retailed to their children what they had learned

* V. Sismondi Hist. des Français, c. 9.

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from their fathers;* and as soon as priests were made from among the barbarians, which necessarily took place as they became settled in the country, they brought with them enough of their early impressions to corrupt their faith very considerably. Hence the denunciations against magic and witchcraft of which none doubted the reality, though the art was considered as a forbidden one. Even the early Christians looked on the deities of the heathens as actual evil spirits, possessed of a supernatural power; and this belief in the δαιμων of the Greeks, which was the lingering remnant of the ineffaceable impressions made in early childhood, exercised a most corrupting influence on Christianity: for if the

* The complaint so frequently made, that in modern times less respect is paid to age than formerly, is an unfair one. It was not his age, but his knowledge, which made the elder great:—and the author who informs mankind, be he young or old, is now the proper inheritor of the respect once paid to the elder, as the depositary of all the knowledge then to be had. Grateful duty will be paid to the parent by the son, for the protection his childhood has received from him; but the rapidity with which knowledge has spread, in most instances gives the young the advantage over the old in this respect; and it is folly to demand that blind obedience should be paid to mere age.

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spirits of dead men could actually exercise an evil power, how much more was it to be supposed that those of the good would have an equal or greater power granted them for beneficent purposes, by the Deity whom they had faithfully served during their sojourn upon earth. Hence the saint-worship which was every day gaining ground in the church. According to the heathen notion, of which this was an adaptation, the spirits of the dead loved to linger round the spot where their former fleshly tenement was deposited; and this notion also having been adopted insensibly by the Christians, the tomb of the Saint, or the spot where any part of his body was preserved, was thought to be especially distinguished by his spirit; and his protection was sought by a pilgrimage to these places. Here it was expected that the favoured of God would give testimony of his power by some miraculous demonstration; and so completely in the course of a few centuries was this heathen superstition grafted into the Christian church, that even the flood of knowledge which the nineteenth century has brought with it, has failed to sweep it wholly away. A melancholy proof of the force of habitual superstition!

It may easily be conceived that if the teachers

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even were so far infected with heathen practices, the people would be yet more so: their religion became what it had been during the period when the gods of Greece and Rome were honoured by processions and holidays: the ceremonies amused and awed the imagination; the meaning of them was forgotten. They had been accustomed to sacrifices, to priests, to altars:—the christian worship gradually assumed all these terms; and what the Apostles and their immediate successors styled "the breaking of bread in memory of Christ's death," was first called "the unbloody sacrifice," and when that phrase had become familiar, as the farther feeling arose that no victim was offered without blood, the actual metamorphosis of the bread and wine into the very flesh and blood of the Saviour was asserted, and the great sacrifice was said to be repeated every time the eucharist was consecrated. Hence arose another error: for if the priest had power to offer this all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, the work of the recipient was needless: he had but to stand by and see the salvation wrought for him:* it was no longer the memorial of the

* It is curious to see how opposite errors run backwards in a perverse circle till they unknowingly meet.

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beloved Teacher whose words were to be his law, and whose example was to be his guide; but it was a mysterious act, done by another, which in some incomprehensible way was to purify him from his sins, and dispense in great measure with that religion of the heart and mind which brings forth "fruits meet for repentance." It was not for this that the Power and Wisdom of God uttered his precepts through human lips; not for this that man was invited to follow in the steps of One "tempted in all things like as we are;" and accordingly we never hear of this sacrifice in the purer ages of the church. Even on occasions when the writer could not have avoided mentioning it, had he ever heard of such a doctrine, a complete silence is observed; and Justinus and Irenæus while claiming for the bread and wine, after it is blessed, a peculiar efficacy towards fitting the bodies nourished by it for immortality, make no allusion to any "*sa-*

The reformers who insisted on faith without works, little guessed that by a different course they at last returned to the very ground occupied by the Romish church: the sacrifice was everything, the *work* of the repentant sinner nothing:—and both entirely opposed the words of the Saviour himself, who disclaims all followers who neglect *to do* what he has commanded.

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crifice," while the Nicene fathers absolutely deny it, and it finds no place in any of the early creeds. The death of Christ, says Athanasius, was necessarily public and painful, in order to prove the truth of the resurrection, by making his actual decease a well known fact, attested by hundreds of witnesses; and his death and resurrection thus became to us the pledge of the immortality he had promised, he affording us in this, as in all other things, a visible example of what he taught.

It is not difficult to account for another abuse which grew up in the church a little previous to this period, namely, the veneration paid to images and pictures of holy men and women. The wish to contemplate the likeness of those we love, after death has bereaved us of them, is one which is common to all civilized nations; and could we suppose that any real portrait of the Saviour himself or any of his followers were in existence, how should we seek for a sight of it, even yet! and how easily the human sympathies which made the features dear, might be changed into superstitious reverence, may be felt by any one who will look at all deeply into his own heart. But though this was at first nothing more than a demonstration of affectionate re-

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membrance, yet when ignorant persons, accustomed to idolatry, saw pictures and images of those whom they had been accustomed to name in their prayers, placed in the christian churches, they naturally paid the same sort of honour to those that they had been accustomed to pay to their own inferior deities; and thus a system of christian idolatry became established, with the usual evil consequence of so thoroughly unspiritualising religion that it has never wholly recovered itself: and as a natural and almost necessary result of this animalisation, came the notion that the sins of this life were to be punished by arbitrary penalties, which the repetition of the great sacrifice supposed to be offered by the priest, might remove either wholly or in part.

The first notion of the purifying flames through which all were to pass in order to free them from the stains of earth, appears to have arisen out of the opinion entertained that the final destruction of the earth would be by fire; and that therefore those who rose from their graves at the last day would have to pass through the flame of the burning world.* Science was

* Hilary of Poitiers and others conjecture that *all* will pass through the flame of the final conflagration;

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not then able to offer any contradiction to the notion that the very particles which had formed the material body * would come together again for judgment; and the Apostle Paul's plain disclaimer of this very unspiritual notion was overlooked. It was then no unnatural conclusion, that if the very best necessarily passed through this painful phase of the new birth to immortality, some distinction would be made be-

not excepting the Virgin Mary and the Apostles. When conjectures had gone thus far, the next step was to suppose that the suffering would be lessened to the good: and by degrees, out of this harmless conjecture, rose the doctrine of purgatory.

* The scientific man who now traces the particles of the body to their ultimate elements, knows that these elements must have been reproduced many times in different bodies, during the changes which disperse and re-assimilate the hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, and nitrogen, of which they are mainly formed. The resurrection of *the same* material particles is therefore manifestly impossible, and those who expected it were derided by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xv. Purgatory, and many more of the kindred corruptions of Christianity, must give way before the light of science; and hence the objection made by some to scientific enquiry. The task of sifting the impressions of the nursery and school room is fatiguing, and it is easier to retain a prejudice and do battle for it, than to demonstrate a truth, and thus build our faith on a rock so firmly that it may be fitted to resist all storms.

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tween them and those who had more of worldly stain about them; and thus, at last, out of ignorance of some of the great truths of science,*

* A few passages from a curious treatise by S. Isidorus, bishop of Hispala (Seville) in Spain, about A. D. 600, On the Order of Creation, will show what the state of knowledge was at that time. He begins with the orders of angels, determining with great exactitude their different ranks from Coloss. i. 16 and Eph. i. 21, as compared with Ezek. xxviii. 3, whence he infers nine orders, supposing the precious stones enumerated to signify different heavenly grades. Thence he proceeds to the firmament, which he explains "according to Scripture," as a separation between two regions; the higher unobscured by clouds or aerial changes, tranquil and pure, in which spiritual beings have their home, according to Ps. cxlviii. 4; the other below, subject to atmospheric mutations, to which the angels that sinned were cast down: but whether "this firmament be penetrable or solid," as authors differ, he does not take upon him to decide, any more than with regard to the sun and moon. Into this lower region the devil and his angels were cast, "before the creation of visible things—for all things were created at once, as the Scripture says, Ecclus. xviii. 1; among which things was the fire of hell, according to our Lord, Matt. xxv. 41. "These impure spirits are endued with airy bodies, which do not grow old, and are passible only with regard to the soul. With regard to water, whether by nature it be salt or fresh, God knows. The number of genera of fish living in the waters are reckoned to be 153 by the philosophers who treat of natural history; which number the apostle en-

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grew up a monstrous corruption which had no foundation whatever on the words of Christ, his

closed in his net as a specimen of all kinds. The situation of the earth is decided by the Psalmist, ciii. 6; from which we gather that it is not founded on any other substance, but rests on its own solidity: — " but how it may be arranged with regard to water and air, the firmament, and the waters that are above the firmament, He only knows who knows all, and whose eye is over all his works." Such was the state of science among the latins at the commencement of the seventh century: for all the learning which existed at that time was to be found among the ecclesiastics. When the great laws of nature, which are the very voice of God himself, speaking by his works, were so utterly unknown, it is not wonderful that strange errors on other matters should creep in; and I have quoted this author for the sake of the useful lesson thus afforded. The Scripture without the aid of science as an interpreter, may be tortured into saying anything.

It was a further misfortune to mankind at this time, that astronomy, the science of all others most likely to correct superstition, and give worthy notions of the Deity, was abused, by those who knew any thing on the subject, to the follies of astrology: so that in the pontificate of Gregory the Great, mathematicians and magicians were confounded. It is even said that Gregory himself destroyed some ancient mathematical works. At all events the study was discouraged to the utmost both by him and the other heads of the church, until Gerbert (Silvester II.) in some measure restored it. v. Brucker, Hist. Crit. Philosophiæ, tom. iii. p. 560.

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apostles, or the early teachers of the Christian faith.

On reviewing the system which now took the place of the first simple preaching of the gospel, it becomes evident that ignorance had a larger share than evil intention in its first corruptions. We may afterwards find designing men taking advantage of these corruptions for their own purposes, but they were not the inventors of them; and it was usually the real worth of those who first ran into the error that gave it currency. The lesson to be drawn from it is obvious, and may not be without its use in the present and future age.



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CHAPTER I.

The Seventh Century.

THE opening of this century saw a tyrant on the imperial throne, whose crimes and incapacity rivalled those which had in former times disgraced the purple: and this man, stained as he was by every vice which can degrade our nature, had been hailed by the Roman pontiff as the beginner of a new era of happiness for the world: it is difficult to say on what grounds. The tyrant, however, is said to have been grateful, and to have bestowed on the obsequious envoy who carried the letter, when he shortly afterwards attained the pontifical dignity, that title of Universal Bishop for which the patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople had so bitterly contended. The tale rests on the authority of one author only, and may be a fiction, but it has been widely repeated.

The crimes and misgovernment of Phocas gave both a pretext and encouragement to Chosroes, king of Persia, to attack the empire in its

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most vulnerable points; one strong town after another was lost, and the remains of the Roman power seemed likely to be swept away by a second Persian empire. Such a ruler was not likely to be borne long: the exarch of Africa had already refused tribute and obedience to the tyrant of his country during the last two years: to him, therefore, the discontented applied, and though too old, or too prudent himself to undertake the enterprise, he allowed his son to embark in it. The younger Heraclius sailed from Carthage with the fleet, A. D. 610, and anchored before the very palace of Phocas, while the former centurion was seized by some of the malcontents, and conveyed on board the galley of the commander. A few words of bitter reproach from Heraclius were his sentence of death, and the people at once invited their deliverer to assume the purple: but the change of rulers was not sufficient to stay the victorious career of Chosroes. The first news which reached the ears of the new emperor was that of the fall of Antioch: Merdin, Dara, Amida, and Edessa, and the Syrian cities of Hierapolis, Chalchis, and Berrhæa,* had already submitted to the

* Aleppo.

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Persian arms; and very shortly after, Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia, was taken and sacked. Palestine fell next; Jerusalem itself was taken by assault, A. D. 614, and the cross, whose *invention* by the octogenarian empress Helena is still celebrated in the Roman church, was transported into Persia by the victor. Egypt and Asia Minor were subdued in the two following years; and, hopeless of effectual resistance, Heraclius petitioned for peace: it was contemptuously refused; but on further consideration Chosroes satisfied himself with imposing a heavy tribute on the empire,* and suffered his slave to reign. How he reigned Persia had cause afterwards to know.

It was when Chosroes was in the height of his pride and power, that he was one day presented with an epistle from a private individual, though of noble blood among the Arabs, requiring from him the homage due to the prophet of God. The haughty monarch knew nothing of Mohammed, the name subscribed, and contemptuously tore the letter. On hearing the manner

* "A thousand talents of gold, a thousand talents of silver, a thousand silk robes, a thousand horses, and a thousand virgins." Gibbon, Dec. and Fall, chap. 46.

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in which his missive had been received, the Arab is said to have exclaimed, " Thus will God tear the kingdom from Chosroes."* The person who thus dared to demand the homage of the conquering king of Persia has now a world-wide fame, which has left that of Chosroes and his antagonist in comparative obscurity; and his influence over the fate of a large portion of mankind has been such, that we must turn from the comparatively small interests of Rome and Persia to the career of this extraordinary man.

Born of a noble race, but left an orphan early, his inheritance was grasped by his relations; and he found himself in a dependent state: he therefore engaged himself in the service of a rich widow at Mecca, whose property he administered so carefully, that she resolved to take him for her husband. This occurred when he was about twenty-five years of age, and he lived quietly at Mecca with his elderly wife till he nearly reached his fortieth year; when, after withdrawing himself for some time from society, he suddenly proclaimed that he had received the Divine com-

* There is, however, so much of discrepancy with regard to the dates assigned to this occurrence, that some doubt the fact altogether.

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mand to purify the world from idolatry. His pretensions were not readily allowed, and it was with some difficulty that he persuaded his wife, his servant, and two other individuals to believe in his mission; but he persevered, and soon after, ten other respectable citizens of Mecca were engaged to embrace the new faith, which proclaimed as its creed, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet."

The Arabians of Mecca were at this time gross idolaters; and, to the eyes of Mohammed, who had seen only the outward practices of the Christians, of whom there were many at Medina, *they* must have appeared no less so: there seems, therefore, good reason to suppose that the first movement of the Arab prophet might have been inspired by his disgust at what he saw around him, without any feeling of self-interest. To a man of strong, though untutored powers of mind, the unworthy notions of the Deity which everywhere prevailed would at last become intolerable; and it is not difficult for an intellect conscious of unusual power, and in a state of considerable excitement, to believe that it feels a supernatural direction. Probably this was the case with Mohammed when his mind was first awakened to a purer notion of the

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Deity by his conferences with Jews and Christians.* He might think, and with justice, that a reformer was needed: he might feel in himself a power strong enough to be that reformer: all this was consistent with honesty and devotedness to the truth; and we have no proof that, in these first moments, Mohammed had any other view than a disinterested one of bringing back religion to its true principles. He probably thought himself a prophet: the Hebrew Scriptures contained the history of many such; and he might imagine, in the confidence of enthusiasm, that he had only to speak to be listened to. When, however, he seemed as a dreamer to his own people, and his arguments and exhortations gained no attention, he seems gradually to have abandoned his hope of persuading by the mere force of reason, and his own internal conviction that what he taught was the truth, dictated to him by that God whose power and unity he was so anxious to assert; and then he had recourse to pretended revelations. Once embarked in that course, he could not draw back; the good

* A Nestorian monk is said to have had much influence over his mind; and his wife's cousin, who lived with them, had been a Jew, and was now a Christian.

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end had blinded him to the evil of the means, and he now found himself involved in an inextricable net of falsehood and imposture, in which every step entangled him more deeply: and such probably has been the history of most leaders of sects who have pretended to supernatural power. Mere imposture wants the earnestness, the enthusiasm which speaks *to* the heart because it comes *from* it: the man who sways large numbers of his fellow men must have first believed what he taught, or he would have failed of awakening a like feeling in others. The design and the imposition come afterwards, when the leader finds his power greater than he expected; and the small motives of self-gratification which so easily corrupt the heart, begin to spring up in it.

Mohammed was a man of handsome features and noble demeanour, courteous and engaging in his manners; and his ignorance of letters was no bar to greatness, when few but lawyers and ecclesiastics, even within the bounds of the Roman empire, troubled themselves with book-learning; and, among the barbarians, reading was proscribed. His opposition, however, to the idolatry of his countrymen was displeasing to his relations and townsfolk; and his uncles

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tried to dissuade him from preaching novelties of which their fathers knew nothing. Where is the reformer who has not been so met by the strength of ancient prejudice? He persevered, nevertheless, in his views, and reasoned with all who would listen to him, on the folly of idolatry: but at this period he asserted strongly the liberty of conscience, teaching that all who led a good life, whatever their persuasion, would be accepted by God. Gradually he made proselytes, and this increased the rage of the idolatrous party. The tribe of Koreish, to which he belonged, and which is considered among the noblest in Arabia, proscribed the whole family, and refused to hold intercourse with any of its members till Mohammed was given up to their vengeance. The feud was kept up, and finally the self-constituted apostle was compelled to fly from Mecca to save his life. This took place A. D. 622; and from that epoch his followers date their year, calling it the æra of the Hegira, or flight.

The inhabitants of Medina, the city to which he fled, had been prepossessed in his favour when on former occasions they had met at Mecca; and now they received him with kindness, armed in his defence, and enabled him by

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their aid, and that of his few but faithful followers, to defeat his enemies in several battles. He had now entered on a career from which there was no retreat: he had laid claim to a divine mission; nay, had perhaps flattered himself, in the first moment of enthusiasm, with the hope of Divine assistance; but that hope was checked by the reality, which sent him from his home a proscribed exile: his followers were few, their enthusiastic devotion must be kept up or they would be overpowered; and thus the carrying on of the imposture became a matter of necessity. Dreams which might easily visit an imagination awakened by circumstances to extraordinary vividness, were recorded as revelations; and the great truths which he thought himself called upon to preach, mixed up with the strangest puerilities, were written by a secretary, and promulgated among his followers as chapters of a book kept in heaven; which were, from time to time, communicated to him by the angel Gabriel.

In this work many of the descriptions of the power and wisdom of the Deity are taken from the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as much of the early history of that people; especially that part which relates to the people of Arabia. To this

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he has added many of the traditional tales of his country, as well as those of the Jewish rabbins, all of which his utter ignorance of letters probably suffered him to regard as of equal authority; he makes many declarations of his own especial mission; and in his denunciations against idolatry, charges that sin on the Christian no less than the heathen nations. He ridicules the belief that sins were to be expiated in purgatory, and represents himself as commissioned to say, "Woe to those who hide the scripture which they have in their hands; who alter it, and say that what they read proceeds from God, in order that they may make their own profit out of it. They have said, 'we shall only remain in the fire a certain number of days.' Say to them, Have ye made a compact with God? and dare you say of Him things that you know nothing of? Those who have sought gain by unjust means will remain for ever in the fire of hell, and those who have believed in God and done good actions, will enjoy for ever the happiness of Paradise." He reproaches the Jews for not practising the moral precepts of their own prophets, and introduces God as saying, "Certainly I gave the law to Moses, and after him sent many prophets. I inspired wisdom in Jesus the

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son of Mary, and fortified him by the Holy Spirit; but you have risen up against the prophets that were sent to you against your will; and you have contradicted some, and killed the others." He complains that those who disbelieved his mission called upon him for a miracle to convince them: but tells them that they have the Scripture, and that if they read it, and do it that is enough for them. The whole is written in a loose and rambling manner; and is very much what might be expected from an illiterate man dictating to another, and unable to carry in his mind the whole of what he had said already: there is much tautology, and very little connection in the matters treated of. He seems to have wished, after the example of Moses, to render his directions the civil as well as the religious law of his people; and this, as the Arabs had at that time no written code, was by no means so chimerical a scheme as it might at first appear.

Had Mohammed lived when the Apostles preached, his abhorrence of idolatry would have made him a Christian, and probably an earnest and bold preacher of the faith; but in the age in which he lived Christianity did not offer enough to satisfy him. From the Nestorians,

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who had taken refuge in Arabia to escape the persecution to which they had been subjected in consequence of their refusal to bestow the title of *Theotokos* * on the Virgin mother of Jesus, he would of course hear a very unfavourable report of the doctrine and practice of the Catholic church; for the arguments which the followers of Christ had used against the heathen might now be used with a no less crushing force against themselves. In the interminable disputes as to the nature of the Christ, the simple faith of the first Martyrs was forgotten, and the second person of the Trinity had been so individualised by the Areians and other sects, that their faith actually presented a plurality of Gods: it is not, therefore, surprising that when Mohammed cast aside idolatry, he should also have cast aside a system which seemed to him so corrupted as to be little better than the superstitions of Arabia. He was probably an earnest enthusiast till he was driven from Mecca; and the change after that was apparently of that gradual de-

* Θεοτοκος is not merely *Mother of God* as it is sometimes translated: for it applies to the gestation and birth of the embryo animal: and places Him whom heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain in a point of view which might well displease piety.

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scription which we so often see, when disappointment has weakened the faith in human integrity, and the love of truth with which the enthusiast begins his course; and he finds that lower, coarser motives are required to influence the masses. Mohammed began by opposing the prejudices of his people: he ended by complying with enough of them to give him a better chance of success. Had his mission really been divine he must have died the martyr of his doctrines; for no age will allow its favourite errors to be held up for reprobation: he yielded something to human motives, found the downward path the most agreeable, both to his own passions and those of his followers; and ended by founding an empire, instead of dying a witness to the truth.

As usually happens, unjust persecution raised a fierce spirit of resistance in Mohammed and his adherents; the victories which he had won over the superior numbers of the Koreish, raised his courage, and he at once assumed the dignity of king and lawgiver. Three times the Koreish and their allies marched against him, but each time they were repulsed with loss; and Mohammed was now looked to as a courageous leader, under whose standard there was booty to be

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won. The Arabs embraced the cause of the successful warrior much more readily than that of the reforming teacher; and the Jews having refused to receive his law, one of his first agressive operations was against a colony of that nation, not far from Medina. His success there led to the attack of Chaibar, the chief city and territory possessed by the Jews in Arabia: and with two hundred horse and fourteen hundred foot, he conquered and took possession of the country. He was now in a condition to attempt more important operations, for the Arabs flocked to his standard; and with ten thousand men, he, by a sudden march, surprised Mecca and entered the place in triumph. The inhabitants won his pardon by embracing the faith he preached; and a few more successful expeditions so won the favour of the roving Bedouins, that his force very soon became formidably large: and nine years after his flight from Mecca, a proscribed exile, he reigned the undisputed sovereign of Arabia. But during this time the tone of his preaching had wholly changed: he no longer taught that men would be judged by their actions rather than the law which they followed; he was now, according to the chapters of the Koran written from Mecca, to slay his enemies, and

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Paradise was to be won by fighting against them. Next we find his own personal affairs more and more minutely ordered. He had the liberty of taking and repudiating wives at pleasure; and when, as was to be expected, quarrels arose among them, the angel Gabriel very soon brought a fresh chapter to the prophet to settle the dispute. Even his personal convenience was provided for by an order to the faithful not to intrude on the prophet when he was busy, and not to make their visits too long. But the Arabs were very little inclined to pry into the commission of a man who offered them the plunder of every people they were strong enough to vanquish; and the conquered would not argue very much against the pretensions of a man followed by thousands of wild Bedouins, whom his word alone could restrain. Idolaters have seldom been martyrs. The Jews and the Christians refused to acknowledge him, but the former were few in number, and were put to death without mercy; the latter were politicly tolerated during the first years of Islamism.

It was not long ere the pride of Chosroes received the check which the sagacity of Mohammed had foreseen. The tribute imposed upon the empire was too ignominious to be borne a

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moment longer than until the means of resistance were prepared. It was better to perish in the field than to endure such a degradation; and all classes joined in the generous effort to free their country from the yoke of the barbarian. The church plate and treasure were borrowed by the emperor under a promise of restoring the amount with interest; and the sums thus obtained were applied to the raising an army, and preparing all that was needful for a last struggle with Persia. He had signed the treaty A. D. 621; one year sufficed him for his preparations; and A. D. 622 he laid aside the purple for the dress of a simple warrior, and took the command of his new levies, whom he trained and disciplined himself, sharing their diet and their labour, and exciting them to enthusiasm by his spirit-stirring exhortations. His success was such as might have been expected: the first time the Persians encountered him they met with a signal defeat, and the victor was enabled to put his army into safe winter quarters on the banks of the Halys. In vain did Chosroes attempt to effect a diversion by engaging a large force of barbarians, Avars, Gepidæ, Russians, Bulgarians, and Sclavonians, to attack Constantinople: the inhabitants defended themselves with desperation, the assail-

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ants were finally repulsed, and Heraclius pursued his victories undismayed by the danger of his capital till A. D. 627, in the battle of Nineveh, he crushed the last hopes of the Persian Monarch. Chosroes had refused all offers of accommodation, and now his subjects, weary of the war, placed his son Siroes upon the throne. Chosroes himself was thrown into prison, where he died shortly after.

Heraclius was returning in triumph to his seat of empire, when he was met by an ambassador from the Arab prophet, whom he received honourably, but the peaceable relations of the two conquering chiefs were not long maintained; and Mohammed soon found a pretext for invading Palestine. Here, for the first time, his wild forces encountered the tactics of disciplined troops; and the slaughter was so great in the first battle, and the sufferings of the march so severe, that the prophet declined prosecuting the war, and contented himself with securing the allegiance of Arabia from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. Probably it was the experience of the strength of the Christian sword which obtained for the Christians, even in the countries he conquered, a complete toleration during the life of Mohammed.

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The prophet died without naming a successor; and the neglect had well nigh been fatal to the new faith: the dissensions likely to arise out of a disputed succession were however in some measure obviated by the choice of Abu Bekr* as caliph, or successor: for he was connected with Mohammed, had enjoyed his confidence, and was generally respected; though to many it appeared that Ali, the husband of Fatima, the prophet's daughter, had the best claim to wield the authority of his father in law; and, for a time, Abu Bekr found but small support from the Arab tribes. But his friend and supporter, Omar, was a man of resolution; and Chalid, surnamed by Mohammed *the sword of God*, was fierce and daring; and again the roving Bedouins flocked to a standard under which plunder was to be won. Syria, from the attempted conquest of which Mohammed had shrunk, was

* He was the father of Aisha, the best beloved wife of the prophet; and Mohammed always paid much respect to his counsels. He was a man of simple habits and strict integrity: at first he pursued his own trade, sold his beasts, and lived on the proceeds; and when told that the state required all his time, he accepted from the share of plunder set apart for the public fund as much only as would buy him a garment.

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again attacked, and with better success; the forces of the emperor were defeated, and Damascus besieged. Nor was this all: the strength of Persia had been weakened by the war with Heraclius, and that country was a prize worth contending for. A pretext was never wanting to generals who acted also as the apostles of a new faith; for the rejection of the religion they preached, was, in their eyes, a sufficient justification of hostilities; and though the first attempts of the Arabs were unsuccessful, yet the enterprise was not abandoned. Abu Bekr, indeed, died ere his plans had fully succeeded; but under Omar, whom he appointed as his successor, the musselman conquests were carried on with inconceivable rapidity; Damascus surrendered A. D. 635, and the conquerors found there stores of arms and riches which assisted them to prosecute the war: and very soon after, a battle of three days' duration at Cadesia decided the fate of Persia. The defeat was so complete, that the Persians, utterly panic struck, abandoned one after another all the strong holds of their country, and fifteen years after this fatal battle their king perished in exile, and his son was glad to serve as captain of the guard to the emperor of China.

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The policy of the caliphs allowed a certain degree of toleration to the conquered Christians: they were allowed the exercise of their religion on the payment of a moderate capitation tax and the administration of the conquered provinces was, upon the whole, equitable; so that the evil of submission was not very great; while the danger of resistance, considering the nature of the invading force,* was enormous; it is not surprising, therefore, that the terms offered, were, in most cases, accepted. In six years from the first attack of Abu Bekr on the province of Syria, the musselman power was completely

* When the Saracen horsemen first appeared in the field as the allies of the Greek empire, A. D. 378, even the Goths, barbarians as they were, shrunk in horror from a set of savages who had more the appearance of wild beasts than of men. Ammianus describes one of them as he was seen in the field of battle; naked, with the exception of a cloth round his loins; with long hair streaming in the wind; uttering barbarous cries, and carrying a poniard, with which he struck his opponent in the throat, and sucked the blood from the wound, while it was yet warm and flowing. The law of Mohammed abated something of this barbarism; but as the Arabs of the desert do not readily alter their habits, we may from this form some notion of the wild people who brought their fierce courage and patience of toil and privation against the tactics of Rome, and prevailed.

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established there, and the emperor of the east resigned all hope of ever recovering the province. From Palestine the next step was to Egypt; and without giving time to the conquering force to grow luxurious and idle in the enjoyment of their rich plunder, the army moved forward, A. D. 638, to the subjugation of this wealthy province.

During these campaigns the caliph himself remained for the most part at Medina: once only, to receive and ratify the capitulation of Jerusalem, he joined the army: but his lieutenants pursued the work of conquest with a devotion to the cause which needed not the spur of the sovereign's presence: and Amrou, notwithstanding the loss of twenty-three thousand of his men, completed the conquest of Egypt by the capture of Alexandria, after a siege of fourteen months' duration. A few years were spent in organizing the government of the countries already subdued: but no sooner was this effected, than the indefatigable "armies of the faithful," as they called themselves, were again in motion, and the African province was the next prize they contended for. Omar was now dead, and the power had past into the weaker hands of Othman, the former secretary of Mohammed. Dis-

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sensions at home prevented the prompt attention which such enterprises require; and although the Arab forces defeated those of the Roman governor; and though the succours sent from Spain by the allied Goths, after relieving Carthage, were also defeated by the musselman general, and Carthage taken, the final conquest of the country was not effected till the beginning of the next century, after a struggle of fifty years with the wild natives of the country.

The speed with which these mighty conquests were made in the east, is to be accounted for in the same way as the success of the Goths and other barbarians in the west: the hardy middle class which formed the strength of the old republic, as well as of the modern states of Europe, had nearly disappeared, and slaves had taken their place. The government of the empire too was at once oppressive and weak: there was military force enough to compel the payment of heavy imposts by the reluctant provincials, but not enough to defend them from invasion. Sclavonians, Bulgarians, Avars, could overrun the open country at pleasure, so that no man was sure, after he had sown his fields, that he should enjoy the fruit of them; and then, after the country had been exhausted by foreign maraud-

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ers, came the imperial governor, to collect taxes which the plundered proprietors had no longer the means to pay. Nor were these functionaries contented with merely collecting the revenues of the state, which already pressed heavily on an impoverished people, but they exacted also large sums for themselves; and if, as sometimes happened, the inhabitants complained, they perhaps caused the removal of an officer already grown wealthy, only to substitute a poorer, but not a better man; one, consequently, in more haste to enrich himself. And if this was the case in the Roman empire, where Christianity, or at least the law founded upon it, now and then made itself heard; how much worse was the state of things in Persia, where the people were without a shadow even of defence from oppression, and where a luxurious and cruel tyrant often united in his mode of government the worst faults both of civilisation and barbarism.* While the Roman empire, indeed, was subjected to their ravages, the Persians could enrich themselves with plunder, and were less sensible of bad govern-

* The account given by Procopius of the Persian war in the time of Justinianus, affords ample proof of the intolerable tyranny of the monarch of that country.

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ment; but when the successes of Heraclius carried the war into the heart of their own country, it may easily be conceived that the sources of discontent already described as prevalent in the imperial dominions were no less prevalent in Persia. Neither in one country nor the other could the great mass of the people feel much interest in the final result of a struggle which would only leave them where it found them, the servants of a master under whose sway neither life nor property received protection. What mattered it to them who that master was?—the main object of the provinces obviously was to shorten a contest which was a palpable and daily evil; and as soon as experience showed that capitulations were in any degree observed by the musselmans, the provinces they invaded hastened, by a speedy composition, to obtain favourable terms.*

* The Monophysites of Egypt, i. e. those who believed that only *one nature* existed in Christ, had been persecuted by the orthodox party at Constantinople, and were little inclined to fight in their cause. When, therefore, the country was invaded by Amrou, at the head of the musselman army, they very soon sent envoys to treat with him. The picture given by these envoys of the life led by the Arabs in the camp, inspired the chief

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Nor was it a mere politic submission; numbers embraced Islamism, so that, after the lapse of a century, the countries they conquered had, in great measure, adopted the faith of the victors; and not upon compulsion, for during that first period Christianity was tolerated. To account for this, it may be observed that though the Koran contains much that is puerile, and much that is offensive to those who read it by the light of a purer faith, yet the many parts in which the unity of the Deity, and his sublime attributes are insisted on, would meet with a corresponding feeling among those of the Christian community who were disgusted by the corruptions introduced into the church, and which were now so incorporated with the system, that they seemed

of the Copts, by whom they had been sent, with such respect, that he no longer hesitated to abandon the cause of the emperor. "We were among men," said they, "to whom death is more welcome than life, and who care neither for earthly greatness, nor worldly enjoyments. They sit upon the earth, and eat on their knees; their leader is in no way distinguished from the rest, and there is no difference made between the poor and the rich, the master and the slave. When the prayer time comes, no one delays, but all wash themselves and pray in silent devotion." Weil. Gesch. der Chalifen. b. i. s. 110.

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to form an integral part of it. To such, the pretensions of Mohammed to a new revelation, which should at once remove these obnoxious doctrines and practices, might seem not altogether groundless; and when worldly interest also prompted to conformity, it is not wonderful that many were converted to the new faith. Both the religious and the political systems of the invaders were, in many instances, received as an improvement: indeed it may be taken as an axiom in politics that no invading force ever obtains permanent possession of a country unless its inhabitants have been suffering under social evils of a magnitude which make them indifferent to change, or perhaps desirous of it.

The world has been long in learning the true theory of conquest, and perhaps even yet it is not thoroughly understood; but the experience of the last fifty years is at least beginning to teach us to look with a more intelligent eye upon the past; and the past, in its turn, if duly studied, would throw light upon the present, by showing the same causes constantly at work and producing, with small modifications, the same effects. From both the modern politician may learn, if he be not very blind indeed, that the strength of a state can only be preserved by

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so remedying social evils as they arise, as to give the mass of inhabitants an interest in maintaining a system under which they find their great interests secure. Christianity would have taught how to do this had it been listened to; it may still teach it; and when the people find themselves not only called fellow men and brethren, but treated as such, there will be little to dread either from foreign invasion or popular discontent.

We may here take our leave of the once great empire of Rome; for though the Arab forces were foiled before Constantinople, and though the so-called emperor retained the forms of greatness, the loss of province after province had narrowed his resources, and the occasional revival of something like vigour in the worn out state only consumed its strength yet faster. Its influence on the fate of mankind was gone for ever.

In the west the barbarian conquerors had established a number of monarchies, more or less powerful, from which civilisation and freedom were ultimately to spring; but at this time there was small promise for the progress of the human race from these states. Serfdom

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and slavery seem to have been universal;* freemen could be reduced to slavery in payment of debt, or for crime, and apparently the laws in this respect differed little among the whole of the Teutonic race, whether in Germany, Gaul, or Britain. In Gaul, however, we find a special mention of Roman proprietors, showing evidently that many of the well born in that country had been allowed by the Franks to retain their rights as free citizens: nay, we even find a Roman *maire du palais*, A. D. 606, and many of the higher offices were bestowed upon them: a favour which they seem to have won by their greater adroitness in those arts of a court, which the fierce German warriors were little inclined to practise: but this does not appear to have been the case in Britain. There the northern invaders continued to press upon the inhabitants, whether Britons or Romans; and these, driven to the mountain fastnesses, quickly lost all vestiges of the latin language and civilisation; while the Saxon kingdoms, on the contrary, made advances towards a regular polity, in which

* The form of sale was "*cum terris, domibus, accolabus, mancipiis.*" V. Marculfi. Mon. Formul. l. ii. c. 14. 19, &c.

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they appear to have been assisted by the ecclesiastics sent from Rome; for though there was little at this period of what we should *now* call learning, even there; still, what little knowledge of letters and policy remained, lingered about the old seats of civilisation, Rome and Constantinople.

Little of the Celtic language remains in modern English; nay, even the names of rivers and places are so generally Saxon in their derivation, that we have strong reason for supposing that very few of the former proprietors and free inhabitants remained among the new possessors. The wild rovers of the ocean, when they found a home on the land, were not unwilling to exercise honest industry, and they seem to have occupied the country rather as colonists than victors. We find little traces of a distinction between the conquered and the conquering race in the laws of the Saxon kingdoms, and their titles of honour seem to point rather to the orderly distinctions between men of the same race, than the scornful distinction between the military master and the subdued cultivator.*

* *Eolderman* or *elder* was among the highest titles; and the honour paid to age is the remnant of the patri-

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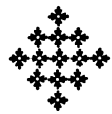
The class which we call "the independent poor," namely, those whose subsistence depends on the hire of their personal labour, had scarcely come into existence at this period. While the population is small in proportion to the land, it is easy to obtain a portion of what would otherwise lie waste, and the high cultivation which requires numerous hands is not attempted, because a maintenance can be obtained without it. But these small occupiers were very frequently reduced to a state of serfdom, or slavery from various causes; and sometimes even mere want induced a man to barter his liberty for food and raiment,* since the proprietor was bound to supply the necessaries of life to his people. If, as often was the case, these serfs were manu-

archal, or family government, in which age gave a title to respect. When the honoured place has been won by the sword the titles imply some office connected with war. *Dux* or *duke*, a leader; *comes* or *count*, a companion. We find these titles very early among the Franks.

* A certain Geatfleda frees "all the men who bent their heads for food in the evil days;" and bishop Ælfric, three centuries later, frees all the convicts who have lost their freedom through crime. The subject will be found treated at length by Mr. Kemble in his "Saxons in England."

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mitted, the unreclaimed forest land offered a ready asylum, where a scanty subsistence could be obtained, so scanty, however, that leprosy, the result of uncleanly habits and unwholesome food, was a common disease, though now wholly unknown among European nations. In short, nothing could offer a greater contrast than the position of the English labourer of the nineteenth century and that of the manumitted serf of the seventh, whether viewed with regard to dwelling, food, clothing, health, or intelligence. To such a population the more civilized priest or monk from Greece or Rome must have appeared something almost divine, and we can hardly wonder at the influence they acquired over these rude nations during the following centuries.



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CHAPTER II.

State of Christianity during the Seventh Century.

IT is now the melancholy task of the historian to trace the decline rather than the progress of the Christian faith. The philosophic spirit of the Gospel was choked by the atmosphere of ignorance and barbarism which surrounded it; and though its truths were partly handed down by tradition, this was but a blind guide, and soon led men astray from the right road. The very spirit of the Nicene fathers breathes in the following exposition of Christian doctrine, yet the same writer insists with no less earnestness on the existence of purgatory, the orders of angels, and other matters of an equally questionable nature; and thus the declension from the simplicity of the gospel went on, and every year with an accelerated pace.

"The Trinity," says Isidorus, consists of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father

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being derived from no other, and himself the source of all divinity; from whom the Son is constantly generated, who has everything in common with the Father,—divinity, eternity, will, power, and wisdom. In short, excepting that he is derived and consequently not the Father, the Son is all that the Father is." The same is predicated of the Holy Spirit—"There is not a triplicity in this Trinity: the separate manifestation of the characters being preserved (salvâ enim separatione personarum) the whole divinity is in common. The Son, after a time, assumed human flesh without defect, and had a human nature with a prudent, intellectual, wise, though not divine soul, that the human nature might be complete, which was thus assumed by the Son, who from all eternity is [a part] of the Father (Dei Patris est), so that he, who in regard to his divinity was the son of God, in regard to his humanity was the son of man. . . . The sufferings of the cross were endured by the flesh, not by the divinity; he suffered death for our redemption and salvation, remained three days in the tomb, from which, by the divine power, he arose in the same flesh, and after he had founded one holy and universal Church by his example, strengthened it by his grace, and

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fortified it by his peace, having assumed all of human nature which is not obnoxious to corruption, and bringing it to the Father from whom he had never been absent, he sits on his right hand; from whence he will come to judge both the living and the dead at the resurrection; sending the wicked into eternal punishment, and giving the just an eternal reward. This," he adds, "is the catholic faith; which it is more useful to confess and believe than to discuss, for worldly wisdom and mundane philosophy, following the images of things rather than understanding the truth of them, is not capable of apprehending it,"* and this was true at that time, for, as has been seen by a previous quotation from the same author, all knowledge of the natural sciences was lost. Yet, as if to show how necessary the exercise of the reasoning powers is to religious faith, this clear catholic doctrine, delivered down from the fathers in terms apparently so unmistakable, was in the course of time strangely altered, as will appear as we proceed: for though the beginning of the seventh century saw the greatest of the bishops of Rome as the head of the latin church, even

* S. Isidori Episc. Hispal. lib. de ordine creaturarum. Ap. Spicileg. V. Script. Tom i. p. 225, et seq.

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he was too far imbued with the superstitions of his age, to put any effectual obstacle in the way of their farther progress. He himself founded several monasteries, and encouraged with the full weight of his example and admonition, the asceticism which was no less repugnant to the laws of nature than the precepts of Christ and his apostles; but which was beginning to be very generally substituted for the milder virtues of the gospel. We find him refusing to consecrate a bishop, not because his life was known to be licentious, but merely because he was known to have a young daughter, though it is by no means asserted that the child was not born in wedlock.* In his letters he records without question tales of divine judgments on monks who attempted to leave their monastery,† and receives without any searching enquiry, the miracles which Augustine the missionary was reported to have wrought. Thus the deserved popularity of this great prelate, far from retarding, aided the progress of corruption in religion; and we may add that the mission of an envoy with complimentary letters from him to the usurper Phocas, whose barbarous execution of

* Baron. Ann. Ecc. A. D. 600, viii.

† Ib. A. D. 601, vi. vii. viii.

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the five sons of the emperor Mauritius before the eyes of the father, was yet fresh in men's thoughts,—formed an evil conclusion to a great life, and gave room for injurious suspicions.

For a time the preaching of Augustine among the Anglo-Saxons appears to have been successful. The Sees of Rochester and London were created, A. D. 604, and the church of St. Paul in this latter city was built. Augustine had already been appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. Abbot Ealred, who wrote two or three centuries after this time, adorns his tale of the consecration of the above-mentioned church with many miraculous circumstances. A fisherman on the banks of the Thames, on the night before, saw St. Peter on the other bank, asking to be ferried across the stream. Being landed on the other side, the fisherman saw him enter the church, and many citizens of the heavenly kingdom with him; and thereupon a heavenly melody was heard, and an inexpressibly delightful perfume diffused itself around. The church was then consecrated by the sainted visitant, and a long conversation between St. Peter and the fisherman is detailed.* Bede, who lived

* Baron. Ann. Ecc. A. D. 610, xi.

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earlier, mentions the erection of the cathedral of St. Paul, without the least allusion to this miraculous consecration,* a tolerably plain proof that it was the invention of a later age. We may judge from this of the degree of credit which ought to be given to the marvels so liberally recounted by the monkish chroniclers.

The church newly established among the Anglo-Saxons experienced considerable reverses after the death of Augustine the first preacher, for Ethelbert, king of Kent, dying A. D. 616, his son who succeeded him, refused to embrace the faith of Christ. Ethelbert had introduced written laws, after the example of Rome; probably by the advice, and with the assistance of the Roman ecclesiastics who had been appointed to bishoprics in Britain, since in this code we find the interests of the clergy especially cared for; and as, in all states, a party will be found to support obstinately what they consider to have been established by "the wisdom of their ancestors," it is easy to conceive that the magnates of the Saxons would act the same part as those of the Goths in the time of Amalasuntha. The heir to the throne, it seems, was carefully im-

* Bed. Hist. Ecc. lib. i. c. 3.

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bued with the principles of the barbarian conservative party, and launched into excesses in consequence, which disordered his senses. The king of the East Saxons dying about the same time, his son also returned to idolatry. Two of the bishops, Justus and Mellitus, fled to Gaul, and Laurentius, the successor of Augustine, gave out that he was about to follow them; but he seems to have wished first to try the effect of one of those frauds which the Romish clergy had so often found successful. He ordered his bed to be made up in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul on the night before the day appointed for his departure: and, according to the tale told by Bede, when all was quiet he was visited by "the Prince of the Apostles, who scourged him with much severity, asking him why he sought to leave the flock committed to him? The next day he visited the king, and taking off his garment, showed the stripes on his body. The king, much astonished, asked who had dared to beat him thus? and no sooner had he heard the cause, than he renounced his idolatry, and received baptism."* The account might be a true one if we allow the Apostle to

* Bed. Hist. Ecc. lib. ii. c. 6.

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have had a living man as his proxy; for to inflict wounds on a body of flesh would require a fleshly arm to hold the scourge: and the bishop, no doubt, thought the deceit pardonable, because, according to his view of things, the object to be gained was a good one. This has been the common excuse for all frauds of this kind, but the barbarian converts thus made were not Christians in spirit, whatever they might be in name; and many of the nations which nominally obey the law of Christ have, in consequence, retained, even to this day, many of their pagan superstitions; as in Hungary, where, if we may credit modern writers, a god of war is still honoured: or, as in England, where the flight of birds and other omens are regarded by some with as much concern as if the ancient belief in auguries were the established creed.

Among the superstitions which were now fast gaining ground was that of attributing a miraculous power to the actual wood of the cross; and when the Persians took Jerusalem and carried off the sacred relic, the historians of the time describe in glowing terms its wonder-working power over the captors' minds;* taking away

* The style of the time however was so badly rheto-

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the courage from some, and inspiring others with the desire to become Christian: two effects, by the way, by no means miraculous. When Heraclius, after his victorious campaigns against Persia, brought back this trophy of his success, he held it to be his greatest triumph: the coins struck on the occasion bear the figure of a cross on the reverse, and when he had escorted it as far as Jerusalem, he himself took the burthen on his own shoulders, and transported it to its resting place. It is added that whilst he wore his imperial robes he was unable to move it; but that when he laid these aside, and assumed the dress of a peasant, he carried it with ease.* A pretty allegory, if we were only allowed to take it as such.

The emperor having restored peace to his dominions by the defeat of the Persian force, turned his mind next to the restoration of peace in the eastern church, which was still rent by contending sects. The most abstruse questions as to the nature of the Deity were mooted, and in proportion to the difficulty of the question,

rical, that amid the ambitious display of high sounding phrases, it is difficult to tell what the historian really intended to say.

* Baron. Ann. Ecc. A. D. 628.

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was the violence of the disputants. Doubts had arisen with regard to the mode in which the union between God and man had taken place in the person of Jesus Christ. The orthodox catholics of the Council of Nikæa, with Athanasius at their head, had maintained, as we have already seen, that in Jesus the human nature was perfect—"of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting;"—therefore that there existed in Christ two wills, the divine, and the human: but that the latter was submitted voluntarily to the former. In opposition to this, other sects maintained that the union of God and man was so complete that there resulted from it *one nature:* others, not inclined to quit the doctrine of the early church quite so much, asserted that the two *wills* were so blended as to form only *one;* and every day fresh modifications of these opinions were set up. Heraclius, unwarned by the previous history of christian sects, thought he could compose these differences, and once more restore unity to the church by a sort of compromise; and a decree was published in which the notions of the Monothelites (one will) were so far favoured as to enable them to conform; but forbidding in future the attempt to discuss questions of this nature. This decree

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was called the *Ecthesis*. It seemed for a short time as if it might have been successful; but very soon the sectarian spirit broke out with double violence: the latin church took up the question, and the decree of Heraclius was condemned with great acrimony. His grandson Constans made the same attempt to silence sectarian violence by forbidding all further discussion on the subject; and once more laid down the doctrine to be taught in the churches, in a decree termed the *type* or *model:* but it had no better success than the *Ecthesis*, and pope Martin and the Lateran Synod decided that both the two emperors and their decree were impious and heretical, an insult which Constans punished by sending that prelate into exile for a year, with every circumstance of contumely; and inflicting a cruel mutilation on the abbot Maximus, who had been active in the Synod. The dissension on these points, as we have already seen, contributed greatly to the progress of the musselman arms; for those who would not submit to have their faith regulated by an imperial decree, willingly paid tribute to the caliph for the privilege of exercising their religion unmolested; and the loss of Egypt is mainly to be attributed to the willing submission of the Mo-

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nophysites, who formed a large and powerful party in the country.

While these fierce disputes upon abstract questions were going on, the attention of the christian community was too much diverted from the true objects of the faith; and though the moral precepts of the gospel were still preached, we find an inclination to think more of the outward act than the inward motive, gradually gaining ground. In a sermon of St. Eligius* which has been handed down to us, and which is valuable as a specimen of the style of teaching at that time, this disposition may be perceived; although the greater part of it is devoted to a plain exposition of moral duties, which might be of any age. In reading it we can hardly avoid acknowledging that the corruptions of the faith were rather a misfortune, consequent on the barbarism of the people and the times, than any intentional warping of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. The ignorance of the laity must after a time infect the clergy who are taken from the laity; and a pure and

* Bishop of Noyon. He was born in the reign of Clothaire II. and his life extended through that of Dagobert and his son Clovis, namely the first half of the seventh century.

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spiritual faith cannot long be duly taught by men who have no means of correcting either the mistakes or the prejudices which their childhood may have been imbued with.

"Do not imagine, my friends," says the bishop, "that the mere name of christian will avail you: that name can only be rightly claimed by those who retain Christ's precepts in their minds: that is, who commit no theft, who bear no false witness, who neither lie nor perjure themselves; who do not commit adultery, who hate no man, but love all as they love themselves; who do not repay evil to their enemies, but rather pray for them; who excite no strife but rather cultivate peace . . . He who wishes to be a true Christian must keep his Lord's commands:—if he do not, he deceives himself. He therefore is a good Christian who puts no trust in amulets or inventions of the devil, but puts his whole faith in Christ alone: who receives travellers as he would receive Christ himself, according to Matt. xxv. 35; who washes their feet, and takes care of them as of dear relatives; who, according to what he has, gives alms to the poor; who comes frequently to church, and makes oblations to God on the altar; who does not taste of the fruit of his land till he has first

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offered somewhat to God; who keeps no false weights or measures; who does not lend upon usury; who lives chastely himself, and teaches his children and neighbours to do the like, fearing God; who comes to all sacred ceremonies, and keeps chastity even with regard to his own wife for some days beforehand, that he may approach the altar of God with a safe conscience; who, lastly, knows the creed and the Lord's prayer by heart, and teaches them to his family. Such as these, my brethren, are good christians . . . labour that your profession be not a false one."

After repeating again most of the moral duties noticed above, he adds: "Seek humbly the protection of the saints; avoid all servile work on the Sunday, in honour of the resurrection of the Lord; celebrate the festivals of the saints; love your neighbours as yourselves, do to others as ye would they should do to you; have charity before all things . . . be hospitable, be humble, putting all your trust in God, because he careth for you. Visit the sick, seek those in prison; feed the hungry, clothe the naked; despise soothsayers and magicians . . . which things if you observe, you may come securely before the tribunal of the eternal Judge,

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saying, Give, Lord, for we have given, have mercy on us for we have been merciful; we have fulfilled what thou hast commanded, fulfil what thou hast promised." He then gives a curious list of the heathen observances which were to be avoided, and which, from this caution, it appears were yet practised among the people. He forbids enquiries as to the future by means of magical arts or auguries; "neither must christians attend to sneezings, or the singing of birds, but whether in travelling, or whatever other work they take in hand should cross themselves in the name of Christ, and repeat the Creed and the Lord's prayer, with faith and devotion; and then they need fear nothing. They must not concern themselves as to what day they leave home, or what day they return; for God made all days alike; nor must they wait for the beginning of the day, or the moon, before they begin any work. They must practise no ridiculous and forbidden rites on New Year's day, or St. John's day (Midsummer) or any other Saint's day, nor use any devilish songs nor dances, nor invocations to Neptune or Diana, &c. nor burn lights nor make offerings to stones, fountains, trees, &c. No christian shall hang charms to his own neck or that of any animal

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even though they should have been made by a priest, and contain the words of scripture: nor shall any one presume to make lustrations, or incantations with herbs, nor pass their flocks through a hollow tree, or under any hollow passage in the earth, which is a dedication to the devil," &c. &c. He then returns to the moral duties, and enjoins sobriety and uprightness; and thus continues. "Know that you have many enemies who are eager to impede your course; arm yourselves therefore in every place, and at all hours, with the sign of the cross . . . for this alone terrifies them, and is given you as the shield which shall extinguish the fiery darts of the wicked ones. But though the sign of Christ, and the cross of Christ are of great avail, it is only to those who obey the commands of Christ: in order, therefore, that it may profit you, fulfil his precepts; and then, whether you sit, or walk, or eat, or lie down, or rise up, continually sign your forehead with the cross."— After again insisting on moral duties, he adds, "apply yourselves therefore with your whole strength to works of mercy. Give to the poor, give I say, and purchase the kingdom of heaven; give a little money and buy life eternal . . . Give, while you have it in your power, for the re-

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demption of your souls; redeem yourselves whilst you have life, because after death no one can redeem you. Let every one, by whatever art or trade he lives, pay the tenth thereof to God, for the poor or the churches; for all things are His, and He who has vouchsafed to give us of His own, has likewise condescended to receive of us the tenth . . . Give then freely of what you possess, knowing this to be well pleasing to God, and do not defraud him of the tenth, lest he should take the nine parts from you."

It will easily be imagined that when donations to the churches had so prominent a place assigned to them in the virtues of a Christian, the gorgeousness and frequency of the ceremonies would be greatly augmented; for it is so much easier to "buy eternal life" with money, than to seek it, as the apostle enjoins, "by patient continuance in well-doing," that we cannot doubt which would be the choice of the indolent: accordingly we find a gradual increase in the number of festivals, and the churches and priestly garments assumed more and more magnificence of decoration.

The right of asylum for all who fled to the churches whatever might be their crimes, was made the subject of an enactment by Boniface V.

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early in this century: and though the privilege was afterwards much abused, it was, at this time, often the only defence of the slave against the violence of his master, and even down to a much later period; as may be seen by some of the letters of Eginhard, the secretary of Charlemagne. This, therefore, like most of the other encroachments of the ecclesiastical on the civil power, grew out of the barbarism of the times, and its general utility in the first instance ranged the most conscientious among its defenders. There were no laws whose course it could seriously impede; but there were thousands who had no rights in the eye of the law, or its administrators, who by this custom were allowed to place their cause in the hands of God. It was a rude expedient suited to a rude age.

Another custom which grew up towards this time was far less justifiable, and threw a bad power into the hands of the sacerdotal order. It was now taught that sponsors contracted a relationship both towards each other, and towards the child, which rendered marriage between them unlawful and incestuous; and thus almost every matrimonial contract might be discovered to be invalid, especially among princes. But though a beginning of some of the after

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abuses may be traced in the seventh century, they were small and few compared with what afterwards occurred. The scriptures were still in the hands of the laity, and were read without restraint by those who had means to procure, and learning to understand them; and they were also read in the churches, though not, it is to be feared, in the vernacular language. As for the modern doctrine of transubstantiation it had not apparently been heard of.*

* There is a treatise, *De ordine baptismi*, written by a certain S. Ildefonsus in this century, and given in Baluz. Miscell. Sac., in which he requires all to read and commit to memory portions of the scripture, or at any rate not to be ignorant of it. With regard to the bread and wine of the eucharist, he says—

"Quomodo est panis corpus ejus, vel quod habet calix quomodo est sanguis ejus? Ista, fratres, ideo dicuntur sacramenta quia in eis aliud videtur, aliud intelligitur. Quod videtur speciem habet corporalem; quod intelligitur fructum habet spiritalem. Corpus ergo Christi si vis intelligere Apostolum audi dicentem fidelibus. *Vos estis corpus Christi et membra.* Si ergo estis corpus Christi et membra, mysterium immensa Domini positum est, mysterium vestrum accepistis ad id quod estis, Amen respondistis, et respondendo subscribitis. Audis ergo corpus Christi et respondes Amen. Esto membrum corporis Christi, ut verum sit Amen!"

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CHAPTER III.

The Eighth Century.

THE beginning of this century saw the complete subjugation of the rich African province by the musselman forces, and scarcely was this accomplished when the cupidity of the Arabs looked round for fresh prey. Hitherto they had spread their armies mainly over the East; they now turned towards the West: the Goths of Spain had afforded assistance to the Romans when the Arab army first undertook the siege of Carthage; and this act of hostility was not forgotten. No sooner was the general of the musselmans in Africa free from other cares, than he attacked Ceuta, which then as now, belonged to the kings of Spain. At first he was repulsed with loss by count Julian, the governor; but suddenly this commander, on some disgust, forgot his allegiance and his country, and betrayed the trust which had been confided to him by introducing an Arab force into Spain, merely exact-

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ing a condition, to satisfy his conscience, which was very little likely to be observed by a conquering army; i. e., that it should not *remain* in Spain. The spot on which the musselmans first landed has since been called Gibraltar * from the name of their commander, and the lines drawn for the defence of his camp were the commencement of the impregnable fortress, still known by the name of the Arab leader.

King Roderic summoned the nobles of the country to repel the invaders, but disaffection had swelled the ranks of the Arabs, and thinned his own; and after a combat of four days, his forces were totally defeated. Roderic fled from the field and was seen no more; and Tarik, by a rapid march, secured the royal city of Toledo. In a few months, notwithstanding some reverses which, however, scarcely arrested their progress, the whole of Spain was in the hands of the Arabs; and excepting a few true hearts that maintained their liberty in the mountains of the Asturias, and formed the germ of the future Spanish nation, the whole country from the Mediterranean Sea to the Bay of Biscay submitted to the sway of the Caliphs. As usual,

* Gebel at Tarik. The hill of Tarik.

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the Christians paid a tax for the permission to exercise their religion, and we do not hear of any general or very severe oppression on the part of their Arab lords.

The speed with which Spain had been subdued by the musselmans, rather increased than slaked their thirst for conquest; and at this time nothing less than the subjugation of all Europe seems to have been contemplated by the Caliphs.* The first Arab force appeared in Spain A. D. 710; but this was merely a reconnoitering party; the main body did not land till A. D. 711. Ten years after this they found themselves strong enough to prosecute their schemes of conquest yet farther; and, passing the Pyrennees, they took possession of the fertile south of France,

* The dissensions which arose among the connections of Mohammed with regard to the succession, were not enough to arrest the progress of conquest, and I therefore pass them over; for they had very little influence on the commanders of the armies employed in distant service, or on the state of the inhabitants in the conquered countries. Those who wish for farther information on this subject will find it in Professor Weil's very able work, entitled, "Geschishte der Chalifen." It will there be seen that the irresponsible power vested in the Caliphs, speedily produced the usual evil consequences; and that the treatment of those who had submitted to their domination was harsher, as soon as the conciliation

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and established the Arab sway from the mouth of the Garonne to the Rhone. The duke of Aquitaine attempted to resist the invaders, but sustained two such severe defeats that he was forced to have recourse to the king of the Franks for assistance, and appeared as a suppliant before the minister who, at that time, under the title of *Maire du palais*, administered the regal power.

The duke having thus abandoned his dominions, the Arabs were no longer opposed; and they over-ran the country as far as Tours and Sens. It seemed as if no region was to be secure from their attacks, and Europe was threatened with total subjugation when a man equal to the occasion arose. Charles, afterwards surnamed Martel, the illegitimate son of Pepin the elder, had succeeded his father in the office

of the people became a matter of less importance. Omar was assassinated by an Egyptian Christian, who had suffered under the oppression of the governor, and could obtain no redress from the Caliph. The two Caliphs who followed in succession, perished by the hands of conspirators who were dissatisfied with the administration of their lieutenants, though they themselves were at least as respectable in their lives as the first founder of their faith. The sects which still divide the followers of Mohammed took their rise in these early dissensions.

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of *Maire du palais*, and had shown himself not unworthy of the trust confided to him. To him the fugitives from the provinces over-run by the Arabs, applied in their distress; and he at once saw that the kingdom of the Franks could only be saved by prompt and efficient measures for checking the progress of the musselman conquests: he forgot, therefore, that the duke of Acquitaine had been his enemy, received him as a friend, and immediately took measures for marching to his aid with the whole force of the Franks.

Some little time was spent in collecting an army of sufficient strength to oppose the Arab hordes, but Charles used such diligence that they had scarcely advanced beyond Poitiers when they were met by the Frank array. After seven days of light skirmishing, they came at last to a pitched battle; and here the personal strength and vigour of the Teutonic race proved an overmatch for the light frame of the Arabian warriors. The weight of Charles's strokes, no less than the vigour of his policy, won for him ever after the *sobriquet* of *Martel* or *the hammer:* and the fierce onset of these iron-handed men bore down all before it: the musselman general was slain in the battle, and the defeated forces retired to

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their camp, dispirited and reduced in numbers. During the night they appear to have quarrelled from the want of a leader to restore order: the different corps separated, and retreated hastily, each under the command of its respective chief; and, by the next morning, not one of this great army was to be seen, and the deserted camp was taken possession of by the victors.* By this decisive battle Europe was saved from the Arab yoke, and the greatness of the Frank empire established: the Saracens, as they were usually called by the writers of that age, were soon driven from the greater part of their conquests north of the Pyrennees, and after a glorious administration of twenty-four years, Charles left the realm he had defended to his sons, as confidently as if he had been the sole sovereign. He died A. D. 741, and within eleven years Pepin, his second son, by the retirement of his elder brother Carloman, and that of his nominal sovereign Childeric III., found his way opened to the throne, and the long-haired Merovingian race, which had ruled over the Franks from the time when they

* The monkish chroniclers affirm that 350,000 Saracens were slain. Even if we judge this incredible, it at least proves that the force had appeared to them a very formidable one. The battle took place A. D. 732.

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first emerged from the German forests, ceased to reign, A. D. 752.

The monarchy of the Franks was now fast rising to a greatness which bade fair to give it the same importance in Europe as had been possessed by the Roman empire. Pepin, the able son of a father and grandfather no less able, both in peace and war, grasped the sceptre as well as the sword with a vigour which gave a fresh impulse to the nation; while the feeble remnant of the Roman imperial power had only made its weakness more apparent by the ineffectual attempt of Leo III. to enforce obedience to his rescripts in Rome and the Italian states. The king of the Lombards was already moving on to destroy the last remnant of the Roman name and power, when the bishop, now virtually the civil no less than the spiritual governor of Rome, with the instinct of self-preservation, turned to the warlike king of the Franks for succour.

Pepin, though inheriting the talents no less than the power of his father and grandfather, who had borne the whole weight of the government; shrunk from assuming the title of king till he had received the sanction of the Roman Pontiff, notwithstanding that he had for many

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years exercised all the royal functions. Contrary too, to the usual practice, he called the bishops of Gaul to the assembly of the *Champ de Mars*, where he was elected king; and seemed anxious to owe his title rather to the choice of the ecclesiastical authorities, than to that of the people at large. In the absence of historical documents, we can only conjecture the cause of this departure from the customs of the Franks: but perhaps we may find it in the growing power of the great lords of the kingdom; whose turbulent and questionable allegiance made Pepin unwilling to owe his elevation to their choice alone. He might think it safer to hold his crown by what appeared to him a stronger, and certainly a steadier title: for though the men might change, the policy of the Western Church, which now acknowledged the bishop of Rome as its head, remained the same. Pepin had himself seen its triumph over the authority of the Greek emperor, had felt the inconvenience of its enmity to his father,* and might not unreasonably conclude that by conciliating the clergy he

* Charles Martel had incurred the hatred of the ecclesiastical body, by taking many of the benefices, and bestowing them on his warriors as the reward of their valour in the defence of the kingdom. Nevertheless the

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should be able to sway his people rather by moral influence than by force; and thus make his government both stronger and more popular. We can hardly imagine that the superstitions of the age would greatly influence the son of Charles Martel. The example, nevertheless, was a bad one, and succeeding kings had to lament that ever a royal head had bowed to receive its crown exclusively from sacerdotal hands. The bishop of Rome had been appealed to as competent to set loose subjects from their allegiance to one monarch in order to put another in his place; and the right thus *conceded* to Zachary, was *claimed* by Hildebrand as divine and inalienable. We have seen the Pepin of modern times endeavouring to found his title on a like sanction; and we may perhaps judge, from the similarity of the circumstances, as to the motives of the more ancient usurper.

The authority of the emperor of the East was still nominally acknowledged in Rome; but the Lombards cared little for this; Ravenna, sup-

Roman Pontiff eagerly sought his assistance, when pressed hard by the Greeks and Lombards; and to this probably it was owing that the discontents of the clergy were little attended to.

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posed to be almost impregnable, had fallen into their hands, and they were evidently advancing towards the full possession of Italy, when the pontiff himself, finding that his subjugation was almost inevitable,—crossed the Alps, and threw himself as a suppliant at the feet of the newly crowned king of the Franks. Pepin promised his aid, and as the price of it, induced his petitioner himself to renew the unction and consecration he had already received from the hands of Boniface, the saint bishop of Mentz. The king of the Franks passed the Alps in the spring of A.D. 753, humbled the Lombards, and compelled them to make a treaty by which they engaged to restore what they had conquered; but no sooner had he departed, than the king of the Lombards refused to perform the conditions, and again invested Rome. Pepin recrossed the Alps A. D. 754, besieged Pavia, and finally compelled Astolphus to relinquish his conquests; but instead of restoring them to the emperor, he gave them in full possession to the bishop of Rome, and thus laid the foundation of the temporal power of the popes.

The middle of the eighth century was remarkable in many ways: not only did it witness the complete annihilation of the Eastern emperor's

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power over the West, and the change of dynasty among the Franks, which very soon placed on the throne a man capable of renewing the Western empire; but it was a period of no less revolution in the newly founded musselman state. Three families considered themselves to have claims to the caliphate: that of Ali, the kinsman of Mohammed and husband of the prophet's daughter Fatima, who had also held the caliphate at the time of his death;—that of Abbas, the uncle of the prophet, which had not yet reigned;—and that of Ommiyah, which had held the sovereignty for several generations after the death of Ali. A. D. 750 Abdallah, surnamed Al Soffar, of the race of Abbas, found himself strong enough to overthrow the reigning dynasty, and secure the caliphate for his own family, which he effected by a series of murders and assassinations such as generally accompany such revolutions among a barbarous people, and which therefore need not have been mentioned here, but for one important result. A youth of the family of Ommiyah escaped from the massacre of his relations, and took refuge in Africa: Spain was at that time in insurrection, and one of the contending parties invited him thither: he went, and speedily secured to himself the sovereignty of

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that country, which never again formed an integral part of the Arab empire.

Under the first Caliphs the Arabs had remained to a great extent a barbarous people: but with the change of dynasty came also a change of manners. The loss of Spain, and the many threatenings of revolt in other provinces, made the preservation of the empire rather than its increase, the object of concern to the Caliphs of the house of Abbas. The provinces over which they still ruled were, however, rich and extensive; and the ample revenues derived from them tempted to that luxurious sensuality, which has proved the bane of all oriental empires, and to which Mohammed's own precepts were in too many instances accommodated. But when the Arab rulers entered into amicable relations with the more civilized states around them, they became dissatisfied with the luxury of barbarism, and sought to give greater lustre to their court by encouraging the arts of civilisation. Al Mansur, the second of the Abassides, when building Baghdad as the capital of his empire, amongst other public edifices, constructed a college for the instruction of youth; and encouraged learned men of all persuasions to fix there as professors of science.

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This encouragement was continued by his successor; and during the reign of his grandson, Al-Mamun, considerable advances were made in astronomy, chemistry,* and medicine, and their assistant arts: many learned works were translated at his cost from other languages, and he himself made some proficiency in the sciences he patronised.

Nevertheless the progress in the real civilisation of the people was not great. The caliphs of Baghdad were but despots such as the East has been wont to produce from the days of the Assyrian empire downwards; cruel, faithless, sensual,—and bound by no law but that of their own passions or political interests. We have but to read the history of their reigns to convince ourselves of this; though the splendour of their court, and the temporary impulse given to science by these princes has thrown a false lustre around them, which has blinded many authors to the true character of their government. I may quote as one example among many, of the

* Many of the terms now used in chemistry are of Arabic derivation. It was a barbarian study of science nevertheless: for their astronomy was mainly used for purposes of astrology, and chemistry was pursued in the vain hope of accomplishing the transmutation of metals.

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above assertion, the fact, that Al-Mamun, the most vaunted for his learning and virtues, scrupled not to put to death an unfortunate poet merely on account of his having celebrated in verse a personal friend in a manner distasteful to the caliph.

It is not under a despotism where such things are possible that the lower orders are likely to make any real progress, and the rapidity with which the Arabs fell back into utter barbarism shows that although there might be some learned men about the court, the benefits of learning had not been widely spread, and the mass of the people remained very much what it had been. Within little more than two centuries from the death of Mohammed, the mighty empire which he had founded vanished like a dream: the later caliphs, worn out with debauchery and excess of all kinds, became the sport and victims of their own Turcoman guards, whose rude valour they had been obliged to call in to defend an empire of which they were become unworthy; and finally a fresh race of barbarians wiped out every trace of Arab civilisation.

Meantime the Frank empire was making rapid strides to power. Charles, who succeeded his father Pepin, A. D. 768, was soon left sole sove-

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reign by the death of his brother; and had thus full scope for the development of the extraordinary talents, which made him the most remarkable man of his time: whose exploits furnished poets and romancers with a never failing theme, and whose munificence won him from ecclesiastics the character of a saint. Unfortunately, however, for the historian, the age of Charlemagne bursts upon us like a meteor: an unexpected light amid darkness, which has had no dawn, and leaves no twilight: and we have to gather the real estimation in which he was held by his contemporaries rather from the traditions handed down to us of the great emperor and his paladins, than from the monkish chroniclers who have coldly noted down the events of his reign; to whom the endowment of a convent or the decisions of a synod were far more important than the rise and fall of nations. Neither do we learn any thing from these meagre chronicles of the administration of his two great progenitors, which yet must have paved the way for his successes, since men and money seem never to have been wanting for his wars, long and distant as they were. We are in equal darkness as to the state of the people at his accession; a few laws of Pepin alone give us some notion that where

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such special enactments as these were necessary, morality must have been at a very low ebb. We may, however, perceive from the charters granted to monasteries, and other deeds of gift, that the land was cultivated by slaves, and that their numbers were so great that the work now executed by cattle must have been performed at that time by human labour.*

* In a letter of Eginhard, the friend and secretary of Charlemagne (Ep. vi.) we find mention of a farm of about thirty-six acres, with *twelve* slaves upon it. (Mansos III. et mancipia XII.) The mansus is decided by Ducange to have measured twelve French *arpens*. Alcuin, the favourite preceptor of this monarch, is said to have had 20,000 slaves under his command, though his estates were by no means so large as those of many of the bishops and nobles of the realm. What the condition of these slaves was may be gathered from other letters of Eginhard. Ep. XV. is to a certain abbess Blidthrul, announcing that one of her serfs had taken sanctuary from dread of her anger, because he had dared to marry a free woman, which the laws did not permit, and he entreats that he may be permitted to retain his wife. Ep. XVI. to Count Hatton, tells of one of his serfs also, who had taken sanctuary to avoid the punishment due to him for having married a woman in his own condition on the same estate, but without the consent of his lord, to whom it was customary to pay a fee on such occasions. Two other serfs are mentioned to another lord as having in like manner taken sanctuary because their brother had committed a murder, and they wished

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Where the slave or serf population was so large, it seems almost a necessary conclusion that freemen were few; and the clergy, the inhabitants of the monasteries, and the proprietors of land who attended the Champ de Mai, or muster of the Frank forces, must have formed nearly the whole of that class. This assembly therefore assumed a legislative as well as a military character, for it *represented* at least the whole body of free occupiers, and it passed laws, and advised upon great political questions before entering on the campaign in which these decisions were to be enforced. Pepin had called the bishops to this meeting, and thus completed the parliamentary assembly of all who, according to the rude habits of the time had rights, or were protected by the law;* namely, those who,

to pay the composition (weregeld) for the crime, that he might not be punished by mutilation (ut ei membra perdonentur). In the case of another murder the same indulgence is sought by the murderer himself. In neither of these cases does the writer manifest any especial horror of the crime of murder: it is spoken of merely as a misfortune on the part of the murderer, that "he has happened to kill a man in an affray:" and the offence of marrying without the lord's consent is apparently viewed in just as heinous a light as that of taking the life of a fellow creature.

* "We ought not to lose sight of the fact that at this

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having arms in their hands, could enforce attention to their wrongs; and the bishops who sate among the chiefs of the nation had their place there rather as holders of large estates,* which entailed on them the duties of other landed proprietors, than as the spiritual overseers of the people. Probably as the interests of the ecclesiastical body and the secular proprietors were seldom the same, the sovereign might think he

period the Frank *nation* was composed solely of the proprietors of lands and men; they alone were rich and independent,—were consulted on public affairs,—admitted to the *Champ de Mai*,—or summoned to serve in the army. Their number perhaps might equal or even surpass that of the English gentlemen of modern times, who are actually in possession of the sovereignty as well as the territory of England: but these are but a small number when a large country is to be defended. A few thousands of gentlemen were lost among millions of brutalised slaves, who belonged neither to a nation nor to a country, —nay, scarcely to human nature itself; and were powerless as regarded the preservation to France of its laws, its power, or its liberty." Sismondi, Hist. des Français, tom. ii. p. 279.

* They might possibly be considered also as the representatives of the whole ecclesiastical body, as they are to this day in the English parliament. The smaller proprietors were also *represented*, for they sent to the yearly muster at the rate of about one man for fifty acres: whatever might be the division of the land.

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was providing a balance against the too great power of either by thus blending them in one assembly.

It is easy for later generations to comment on the faults committed by rulers in former times, when the inconveniences arising from their measures are felt in after ages: and no doubt the share given by Pepin to ecclesiastical persons in the councils of the nation at that time, tended to secularise them, and remove them from their spiritual duties by bringing them into intimate intercourse with the secular nobility: but on the other hand, it might be expected that persons who were in possession of all the learning of the time would prove more liberal, and wiser administrators, both of laws and territory, than the rude warriors who owned scarcely any other right than that of the strongest.* What Pepin's

* Their insubordination had been made evident by the refusal of the Frank nobles to assist Pepin in the expedition against the Lombards, undertaken at the request of Pope Stephen. "His father," says Eginhard, in his Life of Charlemagne, "had undertaken the same task (to subdue the Lombards) but had great difficulty in accomplishing it: for the great lords of the Franks, whom he was in the habit of consulting, resisted his will to the point of loudly declaring that they would abandon him, and return home."—Vit. Karoli Imp. c. 6. We may see in

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real views in this measure were, must remain a matter of conjecture: but as the same policy was pursued by his son, there is good reason to suppose that it was found on the whole advantageous to the nation: for Charlemagne was far from being priest-ridden, as may be seen from many of his acts.

The same cloud which hangs over the previous history darkens the first years of the great Frank monarch's reign. We hear of him in the meridian of his glory as a patron of learning, and diligent in the cultivation of his own mind; but we know not by what steps he arrived at the enlightened views which regulated this part of his administration. Be that as it may, Charles, like all other great monarchs, found men capable of aiding him: Britain at this time had schools of instruction which had produced ripe and good

this one cause why Pepin and his immediate successors thought fit to set up the ecclesiastical against the temporal nobles; and why the gifts to the church were so large. It was the only way of balancing the powers of the state, at a time when there were no "commons." Controversial writers talk much of the "*usurpations*" of Rome: but wherever we look into usurped power we shall find that there was generally some cause that led either to the tolerating or inviting such usurpation, and that without such a cause the attempt fails.

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scholars, and amongst the pupils of the learned Egbert, archbishop of York, was Alcuin or Albinus, a man of rare attainments, and yet rarer integrity. Charles invited him to his court, loaded him with favours, and though he himself was now arrived at middle age, studied under his tuition with the eagerness of a man fully able to appreciate the benefits of mental culture. "With him," says Eginhard, "he learned rhetoric, dialectics, and above all astronomy. He learned the art of calculation, and applied himself with much care to tracing the course of the stars. He tried also to write but he succeeded ill in this mechanical art, which he began at too late a period." From the same author we learn that this great king was able to discourse in Latin with nearly as much ease as in his native German; knew Greek, though he did not speak it well, and was constantly engaged in the improvement of his knowledge at every leisure moment. He founded several schools, or colleges as we should now term them, for the instruction of youth, sent his own sons thither,*

* "His daughters, no less than his sons, were instructed in the liberal studies which he himself cultivated," says Eginhard.

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and encouraged by all the means in his power the intellectual progress of his subjects. The bishoprics, endowed with large revenues, and held by men of peace, versed in all the learning of the time, who were able to leave directions in writing for their successors, must have seemed to him nuclei of civilisation: and accordingly we find him endeavouring to secure the peaceable possession of Saxony by establishing those rich ecclesiastical foundations which down to a late period distinguished Germany from other countries. Would any other system in the then state of the world have succeeded better? Probably not.

The condition of the countries which had formed the Western Empire was full of difficulties: the invaders were of different tribes; they none of them understood the Latin tongue, and differed in their own dialects so far that the inhabitants of one province could scarcely understand those of another. The clergy, educated in the schools of the Latin church, wrote and spoke that language, and despised, as barbarous, the different German patois which were spoken by the people about them. Even had they wished to learn to speak to them in their own tongue, the task would have been almost hope-

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less, for there was not any language that could be called national; and Charles, when founding schools for his people, probably contemplated the forming a real *nation*, by merging all the varieties of dialect in the Latin, and making that once more the language of the empire. The very circumstance that the free population was small, made this the more possible; for of this free population a very large portion, that, namely, which was devoted to the service of the church, already spoke that language. The expectation, therefore, that at no great distance of time Latin would again become the language of all the better sort, was not an unreasonable one: but in the mean time the ministers of the church performed a daily service which no one understood; pictures and images were therefore the sole instruction in Christianity afforded to the illiterate; and at this time there were very few laics who were not illiterate. What wonder that the rude converts from heathenism to a faith which had never been duly explained to them, carried their thoughts no farther than the objects immediately before their eyes.

Charles was only twenty-five years of age when he succeeded to the throne, and he was almost immediately engaged in war. The re-

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bellion of Aquitaine was scarcely quelled, ere he was called to attend to his northern frontier by the movements of the Saxons; who, provoked by the preaching of a missionary who had imprudently used threats to induce them to abandon their idolatry, had burnt the church at Deventer, and massacred the Christians there assembled. The Franks assembled in the Champ de Mai, A. D. 772, at Worms, considered this so great an insult that they declared war against the Saxons; and a cruel war ensued, which was renewed at intervals till A. D. 785, when the whole nation submitted to the conqueror. In the mean time, however, hostilities were recommenced in Italy, between the king of the Lombards and Pope Adrian I. who immediately sent ambassadors to Charles to notify to him that the Lombards had broken the treaty made with his father. The king assembled his chiefs; an attack on Lombardy was decided on; and having crossed the Alps, he arrived before Pavia in October, 773, of which, after a blockade of a year, he made himself master, and with it of the sovereignty of Lombardy, which from that time became a part of his dominions, and was transmitted to his successors in the empire. From thence he hastened back to repel fresh hostilities

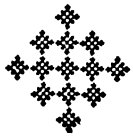
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from the heathen Saxons, whose lands he ravaged with fire and sword for ten years, ere the brave nation and its undaunted chief Witikind, whose spirit had kept up that of his countrymen, could be made to yield. At last, worn down by suffering, they consented to receive baptism as a pledge of their future obedience; but how much these converts, made by the torch and the sword, knew or cared about the faith they professed, may easily be conceived. We need not wonder that Christianity made small way in the hearts of the people, when it was preached by such missionaries.

The bishops of Rome had found the protection of the powerful king of the Franks especially useful; and were ready on all occasions to invite him to cross the Alps in order to chastise their enemies, an invitation which Charles, always too ready to grasp at an increase of power and territory, was never backward to accept. Every fresh expedition increased his influence in Italy, till finally, A. D. 800, at the feast of Christmas, the pope, after celebrating high mass in his presence in the church of the Vatican, advanced towards the king of the Franks, placed a crown of gold upon his head, and raised the shout of "Life and victory to the august Charles,

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crowned by God the great and peaceful emperor of the Romans!" The clergy and people joined in the acclamation with which they had been wont to hail their former emperors, and Charles the Frank, no unworthy successor of Trajanus, mounted the throne of the Cæsars as Imperator of the West.



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CHAPTER IV.

State of Christianity during the Eighth Century.

WE have already seen how the light of true religion was obscured under the dark cloud of ignorance and barbarism which was closing in over the western empire, and it will now be the painful duty of the historian to record its almost total eclipse. The reverence paid to the relics and images of the saints, had for some time been verging on idolatry, as we may gather from the protests of Vigilantius and others; yet as late as the pontificate of Gregory I. we find a bishop of Marseille removing all the images from his church, because they were becoming objects of worship;* a proof that

* "It was told me some time ago," says Gregory I. writing to Serenus bishop of Marseille, "that finding that certain persons adored the images they saw before them, you had broken and cast these images out of the

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down to that time the considering them as such, was held to be forbidden to Christians, by the heads of the Western Churches: but in this century a very different spirit manifested itself. On the accession of the Emperor Leo III. surnamed Isauricus, some little attempt was made by him to curb the superstitious honours paid to the "holy images," as they were called, and A. D. 726 he published a decree entirely forbidding their use. The forms of idolatry practised towards these images were becoming so glaring, that the measure was a needful one, and ought to have been hailed by the heads of the churches as a proof of the Emperor's anxiety for the preservation of a pure faith: but it was met by a most virulent opposition both at Constantinople and Rome. The terms in which a contemporary writer speaks of this measure, af-

churches. We praise your zeal to prevent the adoration of any created thing; but we do not think the images ought to have been broken; for pictures are exhibited in the churches in order that those who are ignorant of letters, may, by sight, read upon the walls what they cannot read in books. Therefore you ought to keep the images, but prohibit the worship of them; in order that the people not knowing letters may have somewhat from whence they may collect a knowledge of history, and yet not sin by the adoration of the picture."

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ford a curious specimen of the tone which then prevailed. "When the emperor Leo Isauricus," says Johannes Damascenus, "arrived at the tenth year of his reign, and his soul could no longer compress or contain the burthen of his heresy, he was delivered of this vile offspring; and having called together the Senatorian order, he vomited forth his absurd and impious decree; saying that the use of images retained in it something of idolatry, and that no public honours should be paid them, lest the vulgar should venerate them instead of God. Whereupon a great tumult was excited among the people, and the clouds of sadness obscured the catholic church. Upon which the wily emperor . . . not imitating the honest freedom of the lion, but endeavouring to use the ring of Gyges, and walk in concealment, said, 'my decree was not that the images should be wholly destroyed, but merely that they should be placed at a greater height, where no one could touch them' . . . and thus he hoped to wean us by degrees from adoring or paying any honour to them"*—for the images hitherto, it appears, had been placed so that they could be kissed by those who ap-

* Baronius Ann. Ecc. A. D. 726.

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proached them. Germanus, patriarch of Constantinople, having opposed the emperor's wishes on this head, communicated by letter with Gregory II. of Rome, who wrote to the emperor in the most intemperate terms; condemning his decree as impious, and refusing obedience to it—"Abandon your rash and fatal enterprise," he writes,—"reflect, tremble, and repent. If you persist we are innocent of the blood that will be spent in the contest. May it fall on your own head."*

The people, being greatly excited by these proceedings, rose in insurrection, and "murdered some of the imperial officers who were employed in removing the image of God, (i. e. the Saviour) over the brazen gates. Therefore many of them," adds Theophanes, "were punished *for the truth* by the amputation and branding of their limbs, by exile, &c." The tumult grew: and the emperor, provoked by opposition, determined to subdue it by force. Germanus was deposed from the patriarchate, and severe measures were taken against those who opposed the imperial decree. Hereupon

* Cited by Gibbon, Dec. and Fall, C. 49, from the acts of the Nicene Council, tom. viii. pp. 551-674.

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Gregory II. called a Synod at Rome, which anathematized the emperor and his adherents; and Italy rose in revolt against his authority. Troops were sent to chastise and subdue the rebellious province, but the Italians defended themselves so well, that the efforts of the Greek generals to enforce obedience to their master's decree were unavailing. The victory of the image worshippers was complete; and the State of Rome may be considered, from this time, as in great measure independent of the eastern emperors, though the government was carried on in their name a few years longer.

The arguments used by the advocates of image worship as given in the works of Johannes Damascenus, are curious—"As the Saints," he says, "are joint heirs with Christ, they must also share in the worship paid to him"—and as this leaves still untouched the question as to the lawfulness of making and bowing down to a graven image; for this commandment had not yet been removed from the decalogue; he adds, that so much greater light had been afforded to the christian church than to that of the Jews, that Moses was no good Judge of the matter. The instances in which the early fathers had protested against any superstitions of this kind,

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were of course passed *sub silentio;* and, as in all abuses, the practice of previous ages was adduced as a cause for perseverance in the evil.

Towards the end of the seventh century Willebrod, an Anglo-Saxon from Northumbria, had passed over into Batavia with eleven companions, in order to attempt the conversion of Friesland. From thence they went to Denmark, but returned to Friesland, A. D. 693, where Willebrod remained as bishop of Utrecht. Winfried, a Benedictine monk, born in England of illustrious parents, and afterwards known as S. Boniface, appears to have joined Willebrod in the first instance; but he afterwards extended his labours, and with much greater success: for with the assistance of some friends he spread the faith of Christ through a large part of Germany: probably the resemblance of the dialect made his preaching intelligible, and thus gave him the advantage of being able to speak to the hearts and understanding of the people he addressed. Several bishoprics were marked out by him, A. D. 744, he founded the monastery of Fulda; and A. D. 745, he was himself appointed to the see of Mentz, from whence it was thought that he might best overlook the various churches he had founded. He was consecrated bishop

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by Gregory II. and appears to have been the first prelate who did homage in regular form to the Roman pontiff. "The practice seems to have slid into the christian church from the feudal system of Germany, and thus gave to the relations between the German church and the see of Rome a tincture of temporality."* His communications with the bishop of Rome were frequent; and the subservience to that see which he had shown in his own person, was carried out through all the wide countries which owed their conversion to him and his friends. The faith therefore, even as first received in Germany, was far from being what the Apostles had taught, and was encumbered with much of superstition; and though a certain degree of civilisation will follow almost to a certainty in the train of that faith, and did so in this instance, the benefit was far short of that which resulted from it among the converts of Ulphilas, and other early preachers. The converted nations were never thoroughly weaned from their old heathen practices; the ancient festivals were but re-named by the missionaries; and the image

* Schleiermacher Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche, p. 360.

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and feast day of the saint did but fill the place and receive the homage which some inferior god of their ancestors had before occupied and received. Both were equally tangible and local. Christianity had now become amalgamated with superstition and barbarism, and the result was a faith nearer the level of the barbarian understanding, but without that elevating influence which for a time had raised the Ostrogoths to learning and greatness, and given room for a hope that the vices as well as the power of old Rome would have been swept away by the converted invaders. The ecclesiastics of the western church ruined this fair prospect by the compliances with the prevailing customs which have already been noticed, and they ended by making Christianity, not what its first teachers had called it, — a philosophical system; but merely another, and somewhat less gross form of polytheism and idolatry.

The fury of the contest between the eastern Iconoclasts and the western image-worshippers had, as we have seen, broken the last ties between the two empires; the bishop of Rome was now the virtual possessor of the civil, no less than the spiritual government of the state: and the intervention of Pepin, who knew and

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cared little about the distant Greek empire, by his gift of the exarchate of Ravenna to the see of Rome, placed the holder of that see in the position of a temporal prince ruling over a considerable extent of territory. Probably the Frank monarch, in this gift, supposed that he was making a vassal rather than an independent power,* and might be of opinion that, at that distance, it was safer to have a bishop than a military commander in charge of his new conquest: but the rough warrior was no match for the superior intelligence of the Italian priest, and this first gift became the ground work of large claims in after times, which ended by es-

* "Notwithstanding the great authority and privileges of the church, it was decidedly subject to the supremacy of the crown both during the continuance of the western empire, and after its subversion. The emperors convoked, regulated and dissolved universal councils: the kings of France and Spain exercised the same right over the synods of their national churches. The Ostrogoth kings of Italy fixed, by their edicts, the limits within which matrimony was prohibited on account of consanguinity, and granted dispensations from them . . . The kings of France seem to have invariably either nominated the bishops, or, what was nearly tantamount, recommended their own candidate to the electors."—Hallam, Hist. and Gov. of Europe during the Middle Ages. Chap. vii.

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tablishing the bishop of Rome as an European potentate. Nor was this position wholly anomalous at that period, since the grants made by kings to their nobility, bishops, and abbots, included the right of holding courts for deciding on both civil and criminal cases on their estates, and the military service which was rendered when called for, was almost the only recognition of the supremacy of the sovereign. The consequence of this naturally was, that the bishops became more and more assimilated to the great lords with whom they mixed on equal terms, and their lives often partook of the same license.

Still however there were to be found among the ecclesiastical body men of higher and purer views. Alcuin, an Anglo-Saxon, and at one time abbot of Canterbury, who has already been mentioned as the preceptor of Charlemagne, thus writes to that monarch on the occasion of the baptism of the Saxons, and other barbarians —"Your piety will do well to consider whether it be not better to avoid imposing the yoke of tithes on a rude people, scarcely settled in the faith: and it should be considered too whether these dues were demanded by the apostles who were taught by Christ himself, and sent to preach to the world. We know that the tithes

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are very good for our substance, but it is better to lose them than to lose the faith . . . And furthermore it is a matter of primary importance that proper teachers should be sent to instruct them: for the mere washing of the body in baptism is utterly unavailing, if the full reception of the catholic faith in the mind do not precede it: for the body cannot receive the sacrament of baptism unless the soul have first accepted the truth. First of all, therefore, the man should be taught the immortality of the soul, and a future state of retribution, both of good and evil, and the eternity of either state. And then he must be taught what are the crimes which will cause him to share in the eternal punishment of the devil and his angels, and what are the good actions which will make him a participator in the eternal happiness of Christ. Finally the faith of the Sacred Trinity * should be dili-

* What this faith continued to be at this time, among enlightened divines, may be gathered from another work by Alcuin "De fide sanctæ Trinitatis." "The benevolent Creator . . . pitying man, and wishing to restore him to his pristine dignity, sent his only Son to assume humanity, that he, being God from God (Deus ex Deo) might be man from man, in order that the immortal might have something about him whereby he could die.

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gently taught, and the coming into the world of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the human race;—the mystery of his sufferings;—the truth of his resurrection;—the glory of his ascension into heaven;—and his coming again to judge all nations."†

This would have been the true teaching of an apostle; but this was *not* the manner in which the new converts were instructed, as is evident from another letter of the same conscientious man; in which he says,—"If the easy yoke and light burthen of Christ were preached with as much diligence to the rude Saxon people, as the payment of tithes, or the legal penalties for faults are exacted, perhaps they would not so abhor the sacrament of baptism. Let the teachers of the faith learn from apostolical examples. Let

The Son of God therefore assumed somewhat from our mortality, whereby, his own immortality being nevertheless preserved, he might be mortal, and vanquish man's conqueror the devil rather by his justice than his power; and show both the equity of his justice, and the eternal benevolence of his mercy. Justice to the homicide angel himself: and mercy to man whom by his great and gratuitous mercy he undertook to redeem"—A remarkable passage breathing the very spirit of the early christian writers.

† Alcuini Epistolæ, Ep. xxviii.

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them be preachers, not robbers." * These exhortations, or other similar ones on the part of other ministers, anxious for the real good of the people, seem to have led to an attempt, in imitation of Ulphilas, to give the christian population a translation of the sacred writings into their own tongue; and the first german version dates from the reign of either Charlemagne or his son. Homilies were also composed by his command, which the more ignorant of the priesthood might recite to the people: but these, again, were written in latin, and consequently unintelligible to the mass of the people, nor was it till the ninth century that Ottfried of Weisemberg composed homilies in the teutonic dialect: the first that had been written.†

The death of the emperor Leo IV. A. D. 780, deprived the Iconoclasts of the imperial protection: the empress Irene, who reigned after him with her son Constantinus VI. was an image-worshipper, and had been banished from her husband's company in consequence. No sooner did she gain power than the superstitious reverence to these christian idols was renewed;

* "Sint prædicatores non prædatores." Ib. Ep. civ.
† V. Mosheim, Hist. Ecc. cent. viii.

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and A. D. 787 a council was called for the second time at Nikæa to decide the disputed question. Here, after some discussion, it was decreed in very explicit terms, that "the holy images" should be adored; and the bishops present reconciled this decision to their consciences by making a distinction between λατρεια which was due to God alone, and προσκυνησις which was to be paid to the images; but as this latter word includes in its meaning all the outward forms of worship, it is not easy to say what was refused; for the illiterate were not likely to distinguish between the mental feeling and the outward act. However, to make the matter clear, the assembled bishops first decreed an anathema against those who refuse thus to honour the sacred images,* and then another against any who should say that the christians honoured these images as Gods. Many of the bishops, nevertheless sheltered themselves behind a general declaration that they received the doctrine "*according to ancient tradition;*" a matter which they found, however, somewhat difficult to decide upon. Some few indeed sought the imperial favour by

* τοις μη προσκυνουσι τας ἁγιας ἡ σεπτας εικονας.

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speaking more decidedly,* but generally the discussion betrays an uneasy feeling of standing on dangerous ground.†

This decision was not received without some repugnance in the western churches; and A. D. 794, Charlemagne called a council at Frankfort of the bishops of his dominions, amounting to three hundred; and laid the question before them in a treatise, which, though it bears the emperor's name, was probably written by some of the divines of his household, if not by Alcuin himself. The bishops assembled

* Stauracius, bishop of Chalcedon, says, "εικονας ὡς αρραβωνα της σωτηριας μʁ ουσας," i. e., the images which I hold to be the pledges of my salvation: and Gregory of Sinope finishes his declaration by the words "σεβομενος ϗ προσκυνων," i. e., venerating and worshipping. It is remarkable that these were the words used for that worship of the emperor's statue, which the first Christians died rather than offer.

† How dangerous may be judged from the following passage from a later author:—"Ergo non solum fatendum est fideles in ecclesia adorare *coram* imaginem, ut nonnulli ad cautelam forte loquuntur, sed et *adorare imaginem, sine quo volueris scrupulo*, quin et eo illam venerare cultu, quo et prototypon ejus. Propter quod, si illud habet adorari Latreia, et illa habet adorari Latreia."—Jacobus Nanclantus in Epist. ad. Rom. c. i. Venez. 1557: cited by Jewell against Harding. Aquinas too decides that Latreia shall be paid to the cross.

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agreed with the monarch in censuring the offering of *any* worship to images as a practice altogether contrary to the word of God; but according to the unwise concession of Gregory the great, allowed them to remain in the churches for the instruction of the people. Charlemagne ordered the treatise which had been laid before the council, as well as the announcement of its decision, to be sent to Rome: but the great conqueror of the west was not a man to be treated with contumely;* and Adrian received it, though not without reply, yet without any of

* "The sovereign who maintained with the greatest vigour his ecclesiastical authority was Charlemagne. Most of the capitularies relate to the discipline of the church. Some of his regulations which appear to have been original are, ... that no legend of doubtful authority should be read in the churches, but only the canonical books: and that no saint should be honoured whom the whole church did not acknowledge. These were not passed in a synod of bishops, but enjoined by the sole authority of the emperor, who seems to have arrogated a legislative power over the church, which he did not possess in temporal affairs. Many of his other laws relating to the ecclesiastical constitution are enacted in a general council of lay nobility as well as of prelates, and are so blended with those of a secular nature, that the two orders may appear to have equally consented to the whole." — Hallam, Hist. Midd. Ages, Chap. vii.

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the violent expressions which his predecessors had fulminated against the Iconoclast emperors of the east. But the evil lay deeper than in the decrees of Synods: and the same causes which had first produced this new species of idolatry, continued to operate,† and to neutralize all attempts to restrain it, until increasing learning and civilisation began again to spiritualise the imaginations of men, and render them capable of worshipping an invisible God "in spirit and in truth."

† There were some bright exceptions to this. In a council assembled at Paris, in the next century, A. D. 824, it was resolved again that though the *use* of images was to be allowed, all *worship* should be strictly prohibited: and about A. D. 823 Claudius, bishop of Turin, a disciple of Felix bishop of Urgel, ordered all the images, and even the cross, to be cast out of the churches of his diocess and burnt. He denied that the cross was to be honoured with any sort of worship; treated relics with contempt; and censured the pilgrimages which were then growing into fashion, as useless, and even blameable.—V. Mosheim, Hist. Ecc. cent. ix.

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CHAPTER V.

The Ninth Century.

THE new empire of the west was scarcely inferior in extent, and certainly far superior in power to that which Theodosius had left to his son, though, like that of Honorius, it carried within itself the canker which was destined to eat away its strength. The provinces of which it was composed, indeed, were not the same, for the Saracens had wrested Africa and Spain from Christendom, and Charlemagne had reconquered only a small portion of the latter; but in return, he had gained in the north nearly as much as had been lost in the south. All Germany obeyed him to the mouths of the Elbe and the Oder, and shortly after his assumption of the imperial dignity, the Avars in Pannonia submitted to him; and the dukes of Venice and Zara in Dalmatia, voluntarily became his vassals: the caliph of Baghdad sent ambassadors

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to seek his alliance with splendid presents,* and his enmity was dreaded by all. But the history of the wars which enlarged the empire while they exhausted its resources, must be sought elsewhere: our business is with the effects of these wars on the inhabitants; and they were disastrous.

Towards the end of the last century an accusation had been brought against the bishop and clergy of Rome, that they authorized the sale of christian slaves to the Saracens: that prelate replied by accusing the Greeks of carrying on this infamous commerce; but his recriminations only go to prove that in fact such a slave-trade was carried on very largely. "The Lombards," says Adrian I., in his reply to Charlemagne who reproached him with this traffic, "the Lombards have sold a great number of slaves, being driven to this by poverty and hunger: and many of the Lombards themselves voluntarily went on board the Greek ships, and disposed of themselves, because they had no means of subsistence."† This severity of suffering must have been mainly

* Among the rest a clock of very curious mechanism.

† Codex Carolini, Ep. 65—Hadriani, Ep. 12, p. 557; cited by Sismondi in his Histoire des Français. Tom. 2, pp. 283-285.

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caused by the ravages of the Frank army; and as the same kind of hostilities were carried on in various directions upon the frontiers of that great empire for many years, we may see in this a cause for the long period of exhaustion which followed the apparently brilliant reign of the first Frank emperor. The same causes which had produced the downfal of Rome, namely the annihilation of the small free proprietors, and the cultivation of the land by slave labour, had the same effect on the Franks as on the Romans; and the immense empire of Charlemagne sunk as rapidly as it had risen.

The military service which formed the armies with which those great conquests were won was onerous in the extreme. Every proprietor of a mansus* had to contribute towards the formation of the army: whoever possessed three or four mansi had to march in person. He who had only one, or even half an one, had to make arrangements with three of his equals to furnish a soldier; those who remained at home contributing to the expenses of him who served. The soldier had to find his own arms,† and to

* About twelve acres.

† Either a lance and shield, or a bow with two strings

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maintain himself till he joined the main body of the army. Whoever neglected the summons was heavily fined, and reduced to slavery until the sum was paid, though the severity of this enactment was a little mitigated by making the death of the man a full discharge of the fine. When it is remembered that Charlemagne summoned his army every year for distant warfare, it will be readily understood that the class of small free proprietors must very soon have been nearly extinct: and we find, in fact, that when the Northmen began their ravages on the coast during the latter years of this emperor's reign, there was seldom force enough on the spot to oppose them, though their numbers were insignificant; and within thirty years from his death they were able to plunder and burn without any effectual opposition the two great towns of Rouen and Nantes.*

and twelve arrows. To those who wish to see an able *resumé* of the state of Europe during the seventh and eighth centuries, I would recommend Sismondi's work above-mentioned, tomes ii. and iii.

* "Ragner Lodbrog entered the Seine with an hundred vessels, A. D. 845, and ravaged both banks. The king abandoned the city (of Paris), and established himself with his nobility at the convent of St. Denys, to defend the sanctuary. . . Ragner and his force appeared

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The laws of Charlemagne have been handed down to us, and the view which they open to us of the moral effects of the system is such as might have been expected. Even the sacerdotal order seems to have partaken in the general barbarism and licentiousness of the time; for it is enacted that "a priest who has many wives,

before Paris March 28. The town was empty, for the inhabitants had fled . . the northmen however massacred all such of the miserable people as they could find in the houses and fields, reserving only 111 persons, whom they hanged in front of the royal camp on an island in the Seine. They then deliberately carried off from the city all that they deemed useful, even to the beams of the houses and churches, while the grandson of Charlemagne, surrounded by a nobility as little courageous as himself, consented to pay 7000 pounds weight of silver to engage the Northmen to evacuate the city they had pillaged." Sismondi, Hist. des Français, tom. iii. p. 86.

The devastations caused by civil broils between the descendants of Charlemagne, and the repeated pillage and massacres consequent on the invasions of the Northmen prevented the culture of the land, and a terrible famine added to the miseries of the year A. D. 845. Hastings, the next chief of the northern bands, is said to have been a peasant from the diocess of Troyes, who joined the marauders who had wasted his property, and adopted their religion, language, and manners. His vengeance, directed more especially against the nobility and priesthood, was probably animated by remembered oppression.

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or sheds the blood of christians" shall be deprived of his office. In another law it is enacted that if any one, fearing the being deprived of his liberty, shall kill any of his near relations, namely, his father, mother, uncle, aunt, &c. he shall be put to death, and his relations reduced to servitude; a proof, if any were wanting, of the demoralising effect of the system which enabled men to sell their children or dependants. The royal estates were administered by superintendents, each of whom was charged by law with the most minute domestic arrangements: he regulated the food for fowls and geese, the sale of eggs, the wool and flax to be given to the women to be spun, no less than the provisions for the emperor's household when he travelled; and these minute regulations may serve as a proof of the low state of intelligence of a population which required such constant direction.

The empire of Charlemagne began to show symptoms of decadence even before his death: the exhausted population recruited his armies with difficulty, and the immense frontier of his dominions was not easily defended. His eldest son, Charles, whom he had made king of Germany, died before his father, and Louis, surnamed the *Debonnair*, had not the talent or the

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vigour requisite for the government of such an empire. It would be both wearisome and useless to follow the history of the family dissensions which gave rise to numberless civil contests, and exhausted yet more the miserable population after the death of the great emperor: we shall see the best comment upon them in the state to which the country was reduced before the end of the century.

In looking back on the character of Charlemagne, we must measure him rather by his times than our own; and we shall then perhaps be more inclined to wonder at the extent to which he had emancipated himself from barbarism, than to condemn his lack of civilisation. He was a barbarian, but a barbarian of a large and comprehensive mind; and had he not been engaged almost necessarily in continual wars with the wild races which every where pressed upon his dominions, he might have left yet larger traces of his existence in the history of mankind. Even in the midst of incessant wars, his attention to the promotion of learning never slackened: the monasteries, then the only places in which it was cultivated, were enlarged and enriched with libraries during his reign, and many of his regulations relating to church affairs

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show a more liberal spirit than was to be expected at that time. But if in some things he was the man of his time, in others he was before it, and these steps in advance were not followed up by his successors. His grandson, Charles the Bald, indeed, continued his patronage of learning: but the devastations of the Northmen soon rendered this unavailing, the vigour of the empire was gone; and finally, at the death of Charles, surnamed *le Gros*, the very title passed away from the descendants of the great Emperor of the West.

The immense dominions over which Charlemagne had reigned were now split into a number of small monarchies, all equally powerless: the Northmen ravaged the coasts at will, the Saracens,* the Hungarians and other wild tribes plundered, almost without opposition, the open country, and sometimes the towns also; but the increasing danger led only to the weak expedient of buying off the invaders: the courage to repel them seemed utterly wanting. "The historians of the time," observes M. de Sismondi, "give no account of the circumstances which led to

* They had established themselves on the Garigliano and threatened Rome.

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this: but on reading their narratives it is impossible not to be struck with the feeling of *solitude*. One would think that nothing remained in France but convents situated in the midst of forests. The cities had lost the importance which they had still retained under the Merovingian princes . . . we sometimes see from the chronicles that they were burnt by the Northmen, but on such occasions the plunder appears to have been far less than when the same Northmen burnt a convent.* The existence of the peasants is as completely forgotten as that of the flocks they tended, and we can only see that the distrust of their masters had left them no means of resistance: for the Northmen, after having carried off the wives and daughters of the villagers, and massacred their old men, and perhaps their priests, dispersed themselves without fear in the forests to enjoy the pleasure of hunting."†

* St. Denys is said to have redeemed its abbot from captivity with 685 lbs. of gold. Hallam, Hist. Midd. Ages, c. i.

† Sismondi, Hist. des Français, tom. iii. p. 277 et seq.

"There was not a town, a village, or a hamlet which had not experienced in turn the terrible barbarity of the pagans. They traversed these provinces first on foot, for at that time they were ignorant of the use of cavalry,

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" There is not a place in the towns or villages," says a contemporary annalist, " where you do not every day see corpses lying unburied, sometimes a priest, sometimes a noble layman, or a citizen perhaps, a woman, or an infant. The great roads, or the more retired spots are alike defiled with dead bodies."* But the very greatness of the evil began at last to work its own remedy: those who saw no hope of safety but in individual defence, began to shelter themselves by fortifying their residences; and though this, too, had its evil, for these castles so often became mere strong holds of robbers, that their demolition was decreed by the general assembly of Pistes, A. D. 864; yet as free men, able and willing to bear arms, were required for the defence of these places, and as the increasing emergency of the case very soon made the edict of Pistes a dead letter, we may trace perhaps to this cause the beginning of a fresh system, which after the lapse of some centuries produced

but afterwards on horseback, like our people. The stations of their fleet were so many strong holds for their plunder, for they built there villages of huts, where they kept their herds of captives in chains." Ex miraculis Sti. Benedicti, cited by Sismondi.

* Annales Vedastini. Ann. 884.

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the free labouring population of Europe. "Every where the lord offered his lands to any vassal who was willing to cultivate them, and contented himself in return with but a slight payment in money or produce: for his rent was to be paid in personal service. These grants were made on different conditions, and to men of different ranks: the younger sons of noble families, freemen, citizens, freedmen, even the serfs themselves were admitted to this semi-possession of the land, so as to bring it again into valuable culture; they submitting themselves willingly, at the same time, to the necessary subordination of rank. The greater part of these men, who would otherwise have been doomed to celibacy, could now marry, and see with satisfaction a family growing up around them . . . Even the lowest of the people were somewhat raised: the peasant, it is true, was still in a state of absolute dependence on his lord; yet this last did not often abuse his power:"* for it was his interest that these men, whose strong arms were to be his defence, should follow him willingly, and shed their blood freely, if need were, in defence of the common good.

Paris was again attacked by the Northmen,

* Sismondi, Hist. des Français, tom. iii. p. 285.

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A. D. 886, but on this occasion it was defended;* and after suffering a siege of a year, was rescued by the intervention of Henry duke of Saxony: but in the mean time the surrounding country was utterly desolated, the inhabitants murdered,

* In a poem written by a contemporary describing the siege of Paris by the Northmen we have some curious particulars of the manners of the times. The writer, apostrophizing France, asks why it had no strength to resist its invaders?...I quote from Guizot's translation, as being the most careful edition of this valuable work. The answer is, "La vice et un triple péché te tiennent engourdie. Tu te laisses emporter à l'orgueil, à un honteux amour pour les plaisirs de Vénus, et un goût effréné pour les habits précieux. N'as-tu pas donc la force de repousser au moins de ton lit voluptueux tes propres parentes, et les religieuses consacrées au Seigneur? Pourquoi te livres-tu à des goûts contre nature lorsque tant de femmes courent au devant de tes caresses? Malheureux, nous nous permettons ce qui est défendu comme ce qui ne l'est pas. France, il te faut des agraffes d'or pour relever tes magnifiques vêtemens, et de la pourpre de Tyr pour donner à ta peau un vif incarnat; tu ne veux pour tes épaules que des manteaux enrichis d'or, une ceinture ne plait à tes reins que si elle est garnie de pierres précieuses, et tes pieds ne s'accommodent que de courroies dorés."—Abbon, Siège de Paris, liv. ii. Guizot, Coll. de Mém. relatifs a l'hist. de France, Tom. vi. p. 65. We may probably find in the vices here alluded to the causes of the degeneracy of the nobles.

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the houses and trees burnt, and the land laid waste. Still the example of successful resistance was not without its effect; the invaders were now encountered in arms by the inhabitants; they suffered a severe defeat from the German Franks, A. D. 891, and the castles which now rose rapidly on all sides afforded the country people a refuge, and made the work of plunder more hazardous.

In Britain the Anglo-Saxons were going through somewhat of the same course that the other barbarian invaders of the Empire had done, but with this difference, that their insular position in some degree prevented the distant wars which had worn out the subjects of Charlemagne. The small kingdoms, into which the island was divided, were indeed often at variance; but their operations were on a smaller scale; and the advance of the Saxon population towards civilisation appears to have been considerable. Ecclesiastics seem to have been called to the council of the king, even earlier than among the Franks; for we find their signature to an act of the Witan, A. D. 680; and Ina king of Wessex consults "with Wihtred, king of Kent, and Brihtwald, archbishop of Canterbury, and Tobias, bishop of Rochester, with abbots

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and abbesses and many wise men;" on the restoration of the churches of Kent, A. D. 694, and here again we must allow that what seems to be, and perhaps was, a grasping worldly ambition on the part of these spiritual functionaries, was at that time coupled with considerable benefit to the people in whose temporal affairs they mixed so largely. The mental cultivation of a Saxon chieftain of the seventh century was far short of that of an English labourer of the nineteenth; and there can be no question that the interference of persons of more grasp of mind in matters of legislature and administration, *must* have been advantageous on the whole to the people at large. The very circumstance that Rome, the former centre of civilisation was still so far looked to as supreme by all the ecclesiastics in her communion, that they usually visited it more than once in their lives, and thus formed their notions of art and manners on a higher model;—their requisite knowledge more or less of the Latin tongue;—and their constant contemplation of the glory of patient suffering rather than of warlike aggression, fitted them to lead the vanguard of civilisation, at a period when princes and nobles could not: and whilst noting with due reprobation the corrup-

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tions of Christianity, which many of them arose from these very sources, we must, if we are just, allow that it is to the christian priest, however corrupt his doctrine and practice, that Europe owes its emancipation from barbarism. Asia and Africa had no hordes more savage than those which overran the Roman empire, sometimes to the utter destruction of the previous inhabitants: but Asia and Africa have always remained in the *statu quo* of barbarism, while the fierce wars of Europe have always ended by a step in advance for the people.* One of the first advantages conferred on the Anglo-Saxons by the priestly order was their written code, in which, though ecclesiastical privileges were carefully looked to and enacted, still some notions of the eternal principles of justice and mercy were inculcated.† The laws

* Let not this assertion be misunderstood. It by no means follows that abuses are good, because they are old usages out of which a· some period good has arisen: and still less can we allow that now, when princes and nobles, ay, and when manufacturers and workmen too, can draw at the wells of knowledge for themselves, it is either requisite or desirable that the *ministers* of the church should be its *masters*.

† The same may be observed of the laws of the Franks. Later writers have ridiculed the sermonising tone of

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of Ethelbert were republished with additions by Ina, and remodelled again by subsequent kings so wisely, that many of the usages and institutions of that time have reached to the present time, and are still dear to Englishmen. The chief of these legislators was Alfred; a name as great in the annals of England, as that of Charlemagne in continental Europe.

It was in A. D. 787, that the Danes or pirate Northmen first made their appearance on the coast of Britain. They found a country rich enough to tempt their avarice, and from that time their incursions were frequent. Ragner Lodbrog who A. D. 845, had pillaged the banks of the Seine as far as Paris, was taken in an attack on the king of Deira or Northumbria, A. D. 866, and put to death cruelly in prison.*

these laws, but they would do well to remember that the people who enacted and submitted to them, had many of them at no great distance of time been fierce heathens, without the smallest notion of the benevolence or even-handed justice which the rudest Christian Code inculcates. It was well for them to acknowledge a law above that of the sword.

* More than one of the old doors of our churches and cathedrals have the *skins* of northern pirates nailed upon them. Copford in Essex is an example of this, and the old doors of Worcester Cathedral exhibited portions of

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His sons, incited by revenge, collected forces from all quarters, and landed on the coast of East Anglia with so numerous a horde that they were able at once to establish themselves in the country. Their first attack was on Northumbria, and in this they were so successful that they remained entire masters of that kingdom, and from thence made plundering expeditions towards the south with so much effect that the kings of East Anglia and Wessex both perished in opposing them.

The brother of the latter was Alfred, a name justly dear to every English heart, and A. D. 871, this young prince succeeded to the shadow rather than the reality of a kingly crown. For a time the youthful monarch made head against the invaders, and with some success, so that a peace between him and the Danish chief was the consequence; but a fresh armament from the Baltic, A. D. 878, for a time conquered all opposition; and for some months the king was obliged to conceal himself, while the invaders remained masters of the country. It is need-

skin, which a late examination has decided to be human. Those of Rochester Cathedral are said to have been covered with such formerly.

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less here to pursue the course of this well-known history: the end of the same year which saw him a fugitive, saw him also a victor; and with the same policy which had been successfully pursued by the great emperor of the west, he insisted on the baptism of the vanquished Northmen as the condition of peace. Lands were assigned them, and they remained as peaceful cultivators in the country which as heathen pirates they had ravaged and desolated: an instance of the civilising effect of this faith, even in its least rational form, and under the least promising circumstances, which had many parallels at that time, and which might perhaps satisfy the consciences of those who aided in these forced conversions.

The cessation of hostilities consequent upon the peaceable settlement of the Danes enabled the great king to devote his attention to the arts of peace. The gratitude of England has so embalmed his memory, that it is hardly necessary, even were it possible, here to recount all that we owe to his enlightened policy: greater than Charlemagne in that he did not sacrifice the happiness of his people to the false glare of military glory: greater too than Charlemagne in the purity of his life, which formed a striking

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contrast to that of the Frank emperor, whose court, even his favourite Eginhard describes as licentious in the extreme; four concubines forming the solace of his old age, and the companions of his daughters. Alfred, on the contrary, was as holy in his private life as he was politic as a monarch; and it would be a pleasant task, did space permit, to trace more at large the character and policy of the greatest sovereign that ever sat upon the English throne; but in these short treatises it is only possible to glance cursorily over political events, and point the attention of the reader to the sources from which information may be drawn on the various matters of interest which are necessarily so briefly treated.



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CHAPTER VI.

State of Christianity during the Ninth Century.

DURING the first ages of Christianity, and whilst its teachers were disinterested men, devoted to the general good of mankind, its effect on the barbarous tribes who were persuaded to accept it, was marvellous: the wild and warlike savage became the orderly quiet agriculturist, and sought only land enough to supply himself and his family with food and raiment. But this generation of teachers died, and the next preachers of the gospel were perhaps tempted by the honour in which the former were held by their rude converts, to practise on their simplicity, and pretend to superior holiness at less cost. The first had won souls at the risk of their own lives, the next began to reap more substantial benefit from the gratitude of their people, and were tempted to prolong the ignorance which ensured them higher honour with

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less difficulty than had been given to the self-sacrificing teacher of the first centuries. Year by year the deteriorating process went on; there was more pretension and less reality on the part of the ministers of the church; more formalism and less morality on the part of its lay members; till gradually the truths of Christianity had nearly disappeared: and, as we have seen in the last chapters, a system of mythology scarcely less monstrous than that of the heathen nations, and an idolatry of the same kind, had been superinduced upon the once pure spirituality of the gospel. The spiritual sense of the sacraments, ordinances, and precepts of Christianity, could not be long comprehended by a people who had materialised the objects of their worship; and this century brought into bold relief the discrepancy of belief sure to arise between the abstract thinker, and the man who can understand nothing which he does not see and handle; and who consequently attributes to his God the passions, the forms, and the weaknesses of a man. The monks and the hermits of the Thebaid who thought to do God service by renouncing every thing which could distinguish them from the brutes, were, as might have been expected, the first to fall into this error, but at

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that time they were fortunately a minority; and the madness of the Anthropomorphites was ridiculed rather than imitated; but ignorance bears the same fruit in all ages, and the church was now fast approaching the point when no abstract idea could be generally received, because the minds of the professors of Christianity were incapable of reasoning.*

* The following tales taken from an account of the life of Charlemagne, by a nearly contemporary monk of St. Gall, whether true to the letter, or not, will give a better notion of the manners and doings of the times than anything I can say.

"There was a certain clerk among the king's followers, of low birth and no-ways versed in letters, whom the merciful Charles, in pity to his poverty, would not be persuaded to dismiss, though all hated him and tried to get him removed. It happened once that on the vigil of S. Martin the death of a certain bishop was announced to him, upon which he called to him one of his clerks, both noble and learned in no ordinary degree, and gave him the bishopric. The newly made bishop, overjoyed at his good fortune, immediately invited many of the Paladins, and many also of the inhabitants of his parish, to a feast; which he had served up with great magnificence. Being therefore surfeited with food and drink, and drowned in wine [dapibus prægravatus, mero ingurgitatus, vinoque sepultus] that holy night, he neglected to attend the vigils. Now it was the custom that the master of the school should fix, the day before, the response which each was to sing at night: this man,

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The corporealising spirit in religious matters, which had already shown itself in the fierce con-

therefore, who had now, as it were, the bishopric in his hands, had had the response *Domine se adhuc populo tuo sum necessarius* given to him. When, therefore, he was absent, and after the reading of the lesson a long silence followed, each one began to exhort his neighbour to begin the responses, but each one had his own part given him to sing. Whereupon the king, tired of waiting, called out 'Let some one sing at any rate.' Then the poor clerk, already mentioned, strengthened by the divine grace and this authoritative command, began the response. Presently the good-natured king, thinking that he probably did not know the whole, ordered some one to help him; but as the others were singing, and the poor man could get no one to help him again, he, having finished that response, began the Lord's prayer, and when all tried to stop him, the king, wishing to know what he would do next, commanded that no one should molest him till he had done; and when he arrived at the versicle *adveniat regnum tuum* the others, nolens, volens, were obliged to reply *fiat voluntas tua*. The morning lauds being finished, the king returned to his palace, or rather to his sleeping apartment, where there was a chimney, that he might warm himself, and dress in honour of the festival; and then having sent for his old servant but new singer, he asked him who gave him that response to sing? to which he, in some fear, replied 'My lord, you commanded it, saying, Let some one sing, at any rate;' and the king answered 'Good'—and then added 'Who gave you that particular verse?' Then he in the terms which were used by inferiors in speaking to their superiors in a former age, and by the inspiration

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tests for image worship, and which only a few had the courage or the will to withstand, began

of God, as it is supposed, answered 'Gentle sir, and lord, and most excellent king, when I could not get any one to tell me another verse, I considered in my own mind that if I said anything improper I should incur your displeasure, and my own damnation; and therefore I set myself to sing that whose end properly belonged to the last response but one. Thereupon the emperor, smiling somewhat, said to him before all his princes, 'That proud man, who did not fear or honour either God or his chief friend enough to abstain for one night from his excesses, so as even to begin the response, which, as I hear, he ought to have sung, is by the divine judgment and mine deprived of his bishopric, and thou, by God's gift and mine, shalt receive it, and rule it by canonical and apostolical authority.'"—

"The most illustrious Charles, when he saw that notwithstanding the study of letters flourished throughout his kingdom, no one arrived at the mature learning of the earlier fathers, after lamenting and wearying himself in vain, exclaimed in a voice of regret 'Oh that I had twelve clerks as skilled in all wisdom, and as perfectly instructed as Jerome and Augustine. On which the very learned Alcuin, rightly thinking, that he must himself appear very ignorant in comparison, was angry; but inasmuch as no mortal could dare to presume in the presence of the terrible Charles, he did not choose to express it, but answered 'The Creator of Heaven and earth had no more like them, and would you require twelve of them?"—Basnage, Thes. Mon. Eccl. Hist. Tom. I. part iii. lib. i. pp. 58, 60.

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now to assume a yet further development. Paschasius Radbert, afterwards Abbot of Corby, thought fit, A. D. 831, to write a treatise "concerning the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ." Four years after, he revised and enlarged his work, and presented a copy of it to the King of the Franks, Charles the Bald. The propositions there maintained were, first, that after the consecration of the bread and wine in the Lord's supper, nothing remained of these symbols but the outward figure, under which the body and blood of Christ were really and locally present; and secondly, that the body of Christ thus present in the eucharist, was the same body that was born of the Virgin, that suffered upon the cross, and was raised from the dead. This appeared to many to be a corruption of the faith, and a hot controversy ensued; and Charles, somewhat startled at the assertion, directed some of the most learned persons whom he knew, to state the true doctrine of the church on these points. Ratramn or Bertram, another monk of Corbey, and Johannes Scotus Erigena, the friend and companion of Charles, and afterwards of Alfred, both wrote on the subject; and the latter appears to have declared plainly, that the bread and wine were the

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signs and symbols of the *absent* body of Christ. The disputants in this controversy charged each other respectively with consequences from the tenets held by them which the holders of the tenets had not at first contemplated, and now disclaimed, and much ill-blood ensued; but the views of Paschasius do not appear to have been adopted in the church till a much later period.

There are some curious letters extant from Amalarius, a man of authority in his day, written about A.D. 827, which show the views of the church at that time: they are the same as were given by Johannes Scotus some years after. He thus answers Rantgar, bishop of Noyon, who had asked his opinion of the words "This is the cup of the blood of the New Testament, &c." "The cup of the Old Testament was that of which it is said, Exodus xxiv. 6, 'Moses took the half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half he poured on the altar:' and a little after, 'this is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you.' This cup had its consummation in the supper of the Lord, Luke xxii. 27. The cup of the Old Testament was filled with the blood of an irrational animal: it was the representation (figura) of the true blood of Christ; which cup, that is

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that in which we drink the blood of Christ, he himself initiated in that supper, after the former one was consummated, saying 'This is the cup of the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you,' namely, 'This cup is a figure of my body in which is the blood which shall flow from my side to complete and finish the old law, after the pouring out of which, the New Testament begins; because new and innocent blood, that is, of a man without sin, was poured out for the redemption of man. . . . Hence the Lord says 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood you have no life in you.'" *

Another controversy arose also about the same time, on the subject of predestination, which was carried on by Godescalcus, a German monk, Hincmar, archbishop of Reims, and others: in this also Johannes Scotus took part: treating these theological questions as matters to be argued philosophically rather than settled by authoritative decisions; since "philosophy" he says, "which is the study of wisdom, and religion cannot be two different things: for what is a treatise of philosophy but an explanation of

* D'Achery Spiceleg. Vet. Script. tom iii. p. 330.

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the rules of true religion which humbly worships, and rationally investigates God the First cause and beginning of all things? We must then confess that true philosophy is true religion, and vice versa, that true religion is true philosophy."* Scotus was well versed in Greek, and from the remains of his writings, it appears that his habits of thought had been formed on the model of the old philosophical schools of that people: but the freedom of his reasoning was unsuited to a corrupted system of religious faith, and very soon he was charged with a number of heretical opinions;† in consequence of which, probably,

* Joh. Scoti Erigenæ de divisione naturæ. Brucker, Hist. Crit. Philosophiæ, Tom. iii. p. 619.

† These are all traceable to the strict philosophical reasoning to which he subjected the doctrines of the church. In his great work, *De Divisione Naturæ*, in which he explains his views, he seems to have pushed idealism nearly as far as bishop Berkeley himself, "When we hear that God has made everything," he observes, "we can only understand by it that God is in every thing; that is, that he is the being (essentia) of every thing. He alone *is* of himself (Ipse enim solus per se verè est) and all which is said *to be* in other existences, resolves itself into him." It is easy to perceive that out of this philosophical system much would arise that was distasteful to the churchmen of that and several succeeding ages. Nineteen propositions, said to be heretical, were collected out of his work against predestination:

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he quitted France and returned to England, where he found a warm patron in Alfred, whose liberal mind had no dread of the truth. Although some time elapsed before Scotus had any successor in philosophical investigation, we may probably trace back to him much of the scholastic philosophy of the middle ages. Godescalcus, who had maintained the doctrine of predestination, was silenced, or rather attempted to be silenced in the usual way; i. e. a synod was called which condemned his doctrine as heretical, and sentenced himself to be whipped; a sentence which was executed in the presence of the king and of Hincmar, Archbishop of Reims. As however the sentence stopped short of capital punishment, Godescalcus contrived to propagate his doctrine, and we may probably consider the ravages of the Northmen as having been more effectual than the censures of the church in putting a stop to the controversy.

some of which were called Pelagian, and others were said to savour of the opinions of the Collyridians: books were written on the subject, of which little is now known, but no further measures were taken, perhaps because there were few or none who could compete with Scotus in learning, and a farther contest was feared; perhaps because the favour of the sovereign was a sufficient shield.

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Somewhat previous to this time there had arisen in Armenia a sect of christians whose aim appears to have been the reform of the many corruptions and abuses which had crept into both the doctrine and practice of the eastern, no less than the western churches. They were called Paulicians; whether from the name of some teacher of later date, or whether from that of the great apostle of the Gentiles, does not seem very clear. They were accused by their opponents of Manichæan doctrine; but even from the rabid vituperations of the so-called orthodox party,* it is difficult to find any

* "It was not long," writes Theophanes of one of the chiefs of the Paulicians, "before another enemy of the truth arose . . . Sergius, the ally of the devil;—Sergius, who transformed many from sheep into wolves, and by their means dispersed those in the fold of Christ;—Sergius, himself a ravening wolf in sheep's clothing; that false counterfeit of virtue, who deceived so many by his art;—Sergius, the enemy of the cross of Christ, who had a mouth full of impiety against the mother of Christ, and contempt of the Saints;—Sergius, the enemy of the apostles, who hated the prophets, and turned away from divine erudition to fables and lies: Sergius, the hater of Christ, and the enemy of his church," &c.

There is not much of truth to be expected from writers of this class; yet we find even Theophanes allowing that Sergius was first roused to a new course of thought by considerations of a very different nature from those likely

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thing in their doctrine that would make it unfit to name them after that apostle. They refused worship to the Virgin, to the saints, to images, or relics, " they treated with contempt the cross of Christ,"—namely, the visible cross, which was at this time treated with undue reverence by the great mass of Christians; they disallowed the ministration of presbyters on account of the superstitions they had introduced; and it is said by their adversaries that they refused to participate in the Lord's Supper; but probably they only objected to the superstitions connected with it; for as they particularly en-

to influence such a man as he describes. Sergius, he says, was one day accosted by a woman whom he calls a Manichæan, in the following manner:—" ' I have been told, Sergius, that you are in all respects a good man, and well versed in science and literature; tell me why you do not read the Holy Gospel?' He, attracted by these words, and not seeing the venom concealed in them, replied, ' It is not allowed to us to read it, *that* is only lawful for the priests,' to which she answered—' not so; for there is no respect of persons with God; for He wishes all to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth. But your priests, because they adulterate the word of God, and hide the things contained in the Gospel, will not allow you to read all that is there written; but they tell you some things, and some they omit, in order that you may not come to a knowledge of the truth. For it is written of them, that in that day

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joined the reading the scriptures of the New Testament, which they received without interpolation or change, it is not likely that they should have set at nought the positive command of the Saviour.

In consequence of their dissent from the prevailing opinions, the Paulicians were subjected to a most cruel persecution: for a time they bore it, but finally, as might have been expected, they were goaded into rebellion against, and reprisals on their oppressors. Multitudes perished in the contest, and whole districts were desolated;* till the Saracens, at last, moved by

some shall say, 'Lord, Lord, have we not in thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works?' and the king will reply 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, I never knew you'—Look, and see if this be not thus written. And who do you think these are to whom the Lord says, 'I never knew you'?—And this most stupid man, being unskilled and rude in mind, hesitated and was silent."—Theophanes, as cited by Baronius, Ann. Ecc. A. D. 810.

It is not difficult to find in this last passage the cause of the hatred with which the Paulicians were regarded by the sacerdotal order. As for the imputation of Manichæism, it has always been made against those who attempted any reformation in the church, and probably the Paulicians deserved it as little as the Albigenses.

* 100,000 persons are said to have suffered death, often by torture, during this persecution.

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their sufferings, offered them shelter in their dominions, and permitted them to build a city for their residence. Some of this sect took refuge among the Bulgarians, and spread their doctrine widely among that people.

It was in this century that the dissensions between the eastern and western churches grew to an open quarrel. The causes were so puerile that they seem scarcely worth recording. They were mainly a difference as to the days of fasting;—as to the mode of using the chrism;—as to the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, or from the Father alone; which latter opinion was maintained by the Greek churches in opposition to the Latins who held the former;—a difference of opinion as to the lawfulness of the election of a certain patriarch of Constantinople; and finally a dispute whether Bulgaria belonged to the patriarchate of Rome or Constantinople. Legates were sent from the latin pontiff at the request of the Greek emperor to attempt to frame articles of peace between the two churches, but they managed the affair so badly that the breach was made irreconcileable.

The dissensions between the descendants of Charlemagne which made each in his turn anx-

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ious to strengthen his party by all possible means, tended to foster the pretensions of the Roman pontiff, whose hold upon the superstition of the age might make him a useful ally. Nor were these pretensions merely those of a worldly ambition: even conscientious ecclesiastics might find, in the barbarous violence of the military chiefs, and the sufferings of the people, enough to justify in their eyes the attempt to establish a sway over the minds of men which should enable them to curb the injustice, cruelty, and rapine which surrounded them. The vision of a spiritual empire which should rule over princes, and render the kingdoms of the world the kingdoms of God and of his Christ, was a magnificent one which might well bewilder the common sense of the churchmen of that period: and in proportion as celibacy became common, and they were cut off from the domestic ties and affections of life, this great dream assumed more power over the imagination. It was thus that men of very different dispositions and qualifications were enlisted in the same cause: the riches and ease which formed the *summum bonum* of the sensualist, the power which tempted the ambitious man, and the capability of doing good which formed

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the dream of the conscientious and learned ecclesiastic, might all be equally attained by exalting the spiritual power of the ministers of the church.* But these last, the only men among them who were pursuing a legitimate object, forgot in their zeal for the honour of God and the good of mankind, that man must work out his own salvation;—anxiously,—tremblingly:—this therefore, like all schemes in which individual freedom is controlled by way of preventing moral wrong, proved a signal

* "The kingdom of France was become at this time a sort of theocratical republic. The authority of the king was nearly annihilated: that of the great lords who could only maintain theirs by their own valour and the number of their soldiers, was much diminished by their own blind rapacity which had lessened the population . . . and what finally rendered the clergy all powerful, was the right which they had arrogated to themselves, and which every one recognised,—of watching over the public morals. They had succeeded in making the debauchery of the great a matter of state consideration, for they attributed to these disorders the imminent vengeance of Heaven, so that the people regarded these crimes with more horror even than the arts of perfidy or cruelty, of which they were the victims." Sismondi, Hist. du Français, Tom. iii. p. 142.

Yet with all this influence they not only did not succeed in curbing the licentiousness of the age, but themselves became infected with it!

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failure: for there is no real virtue unless it be the produce of a worthy motive; and the indolent resignation of the will to the dictation of another never yet made an honest or a great man. He who trusts any one to come between God and his own conscience in the decision of right and wrong, has voluntarily put out the light of his path, and is likely very soon to lose his way altogether.

There was a farther evil also in this, arising from the domineering spirit which the attempt to establish this spiritual empire engendered, even in the best men. They soon suffered anger and other evil passions to mix themselves up in their decisions: matters which began in a question of morals generally ended in one of policy; and thus, instead of asserting, they often confounded the very first principles of all religion and duty. A good example of this may be found in the history of Lothaire, king of Lorraine, and his two marriages with Theutberga and Valdrada. He had espoused the first of these ladies from motives of state policy A. D. 856, but dismissed her the year following, on a charge of incest with her brother, the abbot of St. Maurice. The queen found a champion to prove her innocence by the ordeal

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of boiling water, and the king, unconvinced, and very unwillingly, for he had in the mean time married Valdrada, his first love;—received her back, and banished his beloved bride from his palace. Probably there was little comfort for either in this forced union; for the next year Theutberga confessed her guilt before an assembly of bishops, and acquiesced in the divorce which was pronounced by them. She was sent to a convent, but very soon made her escape, and fled to her brother, the abbot; again, in that very ill chosen asylum, asserting her innocence. Nicholas I. at this time filled the papal chair; a man of severe virtue and great learning: from some cause, however, not easy to discover at this distance of time, he took up the cause of Theutberga, and in concert with Charles the Bald of France, compelled Lothaire to receive back his justly suspected wife. The same domestic discomfort followed, and Theutberga herself petitioned Nicholas for a dissolution of the marriage. In a passionate letter Nicholas refused her request, adding, "As for what you say respecting the validity of the marriage with Valdrada, I have no need of your opinion: it is for us to know what is right."

This domestic quarrel was the subject of two

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councils; two archbishops were deprived of their dignities by the pope, on the ground of their having affirmed what was false; two legates of the holy see were brought to trial for having received bribes from Lothaire; and the question remained an unsettled one for fifteen years. Lothaire was at length called into Italy to defend the holy see from the attacks of the Saracens; and Nicholas being dead, he visited Rome, and endeavoured to obtain leave to take back his beloved Valdrada, in return for his ready aid. But though the man might die, the policy of the see of Rome did not; Adrian II. equally refused to confirm the divorce of Theutbergha; and "when" says the chronicler of the time "Lothaire arrived at the church of St. Peter, no priest presented himself to receive him, and he advanced with his own attendants only, to the tomb of the apostle. He entered afterwards a lodging belonging to the church intending to lodge there, but he found it not even swept."

Lothaire and many of his attendants died almost immediately after leaving Rome, whether from poison or fever does not seem very clear; but it was held to be the vengeance of heaven for having in company with them received the

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sacrament of the Lord's supper, under a pledge to renounce Valdrada, a pledge which he did not in his heart intend to fulfil. The king was subdued, and the ecclesiastical power triumphed; but what had the cause of religion or morality gained by this? False oaths had been taken, bribes had been offered and received, bad passions of all kinds had been excited, but throughout the whole no true principle had been laid down. The king sought his divorce on legitimate grounds, not to please a roving fancy; and had a proper legal tribunal existed, the whole might have been quickly settled, with much less of evil consequence.

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CHAPTER VII.

The Tenth Century.

At the commencement of the tenth century Europe was again split into as many petty sovereignties as at the first dismemberment of the great Western Empire; but with this difference, that the kingdoms then established were formed by the barbarian invaders, fresh from their forests; rude, but active and vigorous, and ready to cultivate the lands they had seized: but the second Western Empire sunk under the inroads of men who were rovers by profession, and quitted for the most part the country they had desolated, as soon as it was no longer in a state to afford them plunder. Rarely, excepting in England, where the policy of Alfred had made the Danish pirates into useful colonists, did the wandering Northmen supply any fresh cultivators to the lands they laid waste. The Arab invasion was far less fatal, for they colonised the countries they overran,

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and Spain, at this time under its Moorish rulers, was populous and rich, notwithstanding the interminable war waged with them by the remains of the Gothic Christians from their mountain fastnesses: but the rest of Europe lay bleeding under the unceasing ravages of hordes of pagan savages from all quarters, who, when they retired, left a desert behind them.

Such was the state of things when Charles the simple, who nominally reigned over a part of Gaul, was raised by the general cry of the few remaining inhabitants, to attempt a compromise with the invaders by assigning them lands for their occupation, instead of obtaining their retreat by bribes, which did but tempt them to fresh inroads. Rollo, one of the most famous leaders of the Northmen, listened to his offer; a large maritime province was allotted to him and his warriors for their future residence* on condition of their embracing Christianity; and Normandy, as it was henceforward called, soon grew into a populous and prosperous state under the vigorous administration of its new ruler, notwithstanding that, when first given into his hands, it was so complete a desert, that the new

* A.D. 911.

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colonists had to seek their food for the first year from the neighbouring states. Under the government of this Northman chief the lands were cultivated, the churches rebuilt, the towns walled, the mouths of the rivers fortified against other invaders, fresh colonists invited, the rights of property protected by severe laws, and, which would hardly have been expected from the previous habits of the people, the language, customs, and manners of the more civilized race around them, no less than their religion, were adopted by the new comers. Nay, the system of feudal subordination which had at first appeared a degradation in the eyes of the haughty warriors who had hitherto owned no power but that of the sword,* was very soon fully adopted by them.

* The tale of Rollo's first act of homage is tolerably well known, but it is so characteristic that I am tempted to repeat it. When the bishops, who conducted the negotiation between the two parties, called on the pirate chief to perform the act of homage for the fief granted him, by kissing the king's feet, he positively refused; but allowed one of his followers to perform it for him. Instead, however, of kneeling as was usual, the Northman stood erect, and seizing the king's foot, raised it to his lips so rudely as to throw him on his back, amid shouts of laughter from his companions. The Franks

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It is almost always an error to suppose that any system which takes deep root in the habits of a people has been arbitrarily established. The great mass of mankind seldom looks very far beyond the present; and almost all legislation, and certainly the best legislation, is no more than such a modification of existing customs to suit them to the present need, as might spring from minds trained in their age's mode of thought, though probably the most intelligent among these. The feudal system, however arbitrary and artificial it might seem, forms in fact no exception to this general observation: it grew out of the necessity of the times; and seems to have been a necessary phase of man's progress from the utter degradation of society consequent on the extension of slavery, towards a point not yet attained, but which every fresh modification carries us nearer to; namely, the

prudently dissembled their displeasure at this insolence, and Normandy remained nominally a fief; but for a long time the vassal was more powerful than his sovereign; and more than once the Normans relapsed into their old habits, and made predatory incursions into the surrounding provinces, the inhabitants of which, however, were now able to retaliate by doing the like, and by this rude justice enforced a better regard to treaties.

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full development of the powers of the human race as moral and intellectual beings.

The Normans adopted the feudal system, not because they liked its forms; that was seen by the repugnance they manifested in complying with them; but because the keen intellect of their chief quickly perceived its advantages in the then state of things. He had to defend his newly settled country against fresh inroads from such as himself: none better knew the habits of these roving bands, or was more capable of providing against them: and Rollo, with a nation of warriors under his command, would find it a natural way of providing for the defence of the country, to call on all proprietors, not only to continue to exercise themselves in the use of the arms they had so long wielded, but to make their dependants capable of aiding them effectually, when called upon to do so. The system which was already springing up in the Western Empire offered facilities for this purpose, and the Duchy of Normandy soon offered a complete specimen of feudal institutions.

The system of feudal tenure was so complex that it would not be possible here to enter upon it at large:* the principle which it embodied

* The subject will be found amply discussed in Hal-

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was, that in return for a certain military service, needful for the defence of the common country, the vassal should enjoy certain emoluments or privileges, according to his station; but the times were too rude to allow any orderly carrying out of principles; and facts were continually at variance with the obedience which this principle supposed, whenever the lord, either from his character or want of resources, was unable to enforce it. Thus, in France, the weakness of the later sovereigns of the race of Charlemagne had allowed the great lords to arrogate to themselves such large privileges, that notwithstanding their nominal vassalage, they ruled independently in their respective duchies or counties; and the nominal king, long before the end of the tenth century, had become a mere puppet, recognised only by ecclesiastics, and trampled upon even by them; while in Germany, Henry the Fowler and the princes of his house, who ruled during this century, vindicated the imperial authority, and compelled obedience to their mandates.

When the great vassals, however, had become

lam's "History of the Governments of Europe during the Middle Ages," a work within the reach of all. Likewise in Sismondi's "Histoire des Français."

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all but independent sovereigns, the same thing happened to them that had occurred in their own case. Their power had been founded on the re-distribution of the fiefs they held from the crown, into smaller parcels with the like obligation to military service; and this sub-infeodation led again to a struggle on the part of a viscount or baron whose lands were sufficiently extensive to enable him to raise a considerable force, and who wished, in his turn, to rule independently in his own estates: and thus the feudal system, though in theory the most orderly imaginable; though the number of men to be brought into the field, and their time of service, was distinctly understood; though the occasions on which the lord or *suzerain* could claim money payments from the vassal were specified; and though the duties and privileges of every grade of society appeared to be sufficiently marked; was in fact a continual source of petty wars, which when the first great cause which led to its adoption had ceased, became in their turn a serious evil.

The lowest class, however, in the social arrangement, the serf, was a gainer: he was, it is true, only one degree above the absolute slave bought in the market, but that one degree was

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much for human nature. The serf, though wholly dependent on his lord, remained among his own people; he was fixed to the land. If that was transferred, he was transferred with it: the hut which his father had inhabited, and the children which had grown up around him, were not taken from him, and the change of lord mattered little to him. The protection from rapine and massacre which the castle afforded, was a comparative comfort; and probably at the time when this system spread so widely over Europe, all classes found their condition on the whole improved by it.

The following description of the state of the country, though especially applicable to Gaul, may be taken as a fair one of the chief of Europe at this period: rude enough, but still a degree better than the state of things towards the latter part of the preceding century. "The towns, pillaged and burnt in every war, whether civil or foreign, were reduced to a most deplorable condition. They were no longer the seat of government or of subordinate office: France had no longer a capital, the provinces had no metropolis: kings, prelates, dukes, counts, and viscounts, inhabited their respective castles, and it was there that the courts of justice were held.

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Certain trades were still carried on in the towns for the domestic uses of the neighbourhood; and those in the south had in some degree escaped the ravages which had so completely ruined the north; but in general, commerce had, as usual, travelled after the consumers. It was not in the ancient capitals of Gaul that the rich stuffs, armour, &c., used by the nobles and their dames, were to be found: the trader was necessarily itinerant, as he still is in the Levant. He travelled with his goods from the castle of one count or lord, to another; had no fixed habitation, no known depôt of goods; no fortune which could be appreciated, excepting the bales which he carried with him: thus he avoided the extortions of the great against which he had no other protection; and among whom he was accustomed to make his round. As for the mechanical trades which require less intelligence and less capital, the great lords generally had these exercised by some of their serfs:—thus the building of a convent or a castle generally entailed the building also of a village, often a miserable one, where those whose arts or whose labour were necessary to the lord, found shelter under his protection. In the course of the tenth century these villages, which at a later period be-

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came small towns, were greatly multiplied; for as the feudatories increased in number, fresh castles were constructed, and the number of these villages contributed to hasten the ruin of the great cities.—After the Northmen, the Saracens, or the Hungarians had burnt one of these, a few of the miserable fugitives returned to its ruins, but they brought back with them no means to regain their former opulence, or to repair the damage done.

"The impoverishment of the great cities, and the diminution in the number of their inhabitants, seems to have caused also the loss of their privileges; for we hear nothing in the tenth century of the curia, senate, &c.; yet no one appears to have complained of this; for no one seems to have remained within the walls capable of claiming these rights. Some charters, it is true, which belong to this period, indicate another kind of corporation, which had been preserved chiefly in the south, in the midst of the lands of the nobility. These were villages built in the open country, which the villagers held as a free possession. It would appear that these men, too weak to resist singly the counts or prelates who surrounded them, had maintained their freedom by becoming joint proprietors of

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certain lands. The whole village was equally interested in the purchases, sales, &c. and formed a little republic in the midst of princes, which derived its safety from the union of its citizens.

"While the class of burghers had thus disappeared, that of serfs, or persons wholly dependent on the great lords, began to multiply—because the lord, being in great measure independent, had more need of men than of money for his defence; and these men who knew nothing beyond the lord of the castle under whose protection they lived, had no idea of a nation or a country. The fief on which they were born was all that they had any concern with."*

The wise administration of Alfred in England, had prevented that country from suffering to the same extent as others from the attacks of the Northmen. The colonies of Danes settled in the country were frequently at war, indeed, with the Anglo-Saxons, but at any rate they cultivated their own lands; and no worse ravages were inflicted than those common to all warfare. The son of Alfred was generally successful in defending his country, and Athelstan who came to the throne A. D. 924, reaped the

* Sismondi, Hist. des Français. Tom. iii. p. 584, et seq.

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fruit of the two able reigns which had preceded him, and appears to have been looked up to by his contemporaries as one of the most powerful of the then sovereigns of christendom. The king of Norway confided to him the education of his son Haco,* and to his English education this young prince probably owed the choice which called him to the throne, no less than the honorable title of Haco the good, by which his grateful subjects distinguished him. Other sovereigns too, when driven from their own country, found shelter in the more peaceful realm of England, and the young princes thus educated in the English court, returned, in various instances, to rule with credit to themselves, and advantage to their dependents.

There is no trace at this time of feudal institutions in England, and slavery appears to have been in the course of extinction rather from the kindly feeling of the people, which made manumission frequent, than from any great changes

* "Ut nutriretur et disceret morum gentis" are the reasons assigned by Theodoric for this. Hist. Norw. c. 2., p. 7, as cited by Turner. Athelstan was both learned himself, and a promoter of learning in others. In the Cotton library are said to be two MSS. which were presented by this king to the church of Canterbury.

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in the social system. Athelstan's edict ordering relief to be administered to certain poor persons from each of his farms, in a regular ratio, proves that a class of free labourers must at this time have been known, however few, in numbers, for slaves were maintained at the cost of their masters, and needed no such alms. His further order that yearly one convict, who had suffered loss of liberty as a punishment, should be redeemed, shows also that slavery was becoming rather a penalty than an habitual state.

In Germany the necessity of defending the country against the invasions of the barbarous Northmen, Hungarians, &c. had given rise to some social arrangements peculiar to that country. When the line of Charlemagne became extinct, the German chiefs, never very much inclined to acknowledge the rule of hereditary succession, threw it off altogether: the necessity of the time required a man who could lead them to battle, and they met and elected a sovereign. At his death he himself recommended the duke of Saxony to succeed him in preference to his own relations; and the after fame of this prince known as Henry I. or *the Fowler*, justified this preference. By his military skill he defended Germany from the inroads of the barbarian

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tribes which had carried such desolation in their train; but this was his least merit: like Alfred he devoted his attention to the improvement of the social condition of the people, and like Alfred therefore, is remembered as the benefactor of his country. The roving bands of robbers, formed of men who, when they could no longer secure the fruits of honest industry, had abandoned hopeless labour for a life of rapine, were collected and formed into a corps for military service under the sovereign; a certain proportion of the peasantry, whose scattered condition had made them an easy prey to marauders, foreign and domestic, were drafted into fortified towns; and those who remained in the open country were called upon to supply a third part of their produce for the maintenance of the men thus placed in garrison for their defence, as well as for the formation of magazines of corn to prevent the danger of future famine. Those who were thus brought together in a state of comparative ease, became the leaders of civilisation; and we shall see as we go on, that the cities which grew out of the necessity of the times, came at last to form communities capable of resisting oppression, and laid the foundation of that middle class which has always offered the strongest resist-

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ance to tyranny, whether it be of the many or the few.

The energetic character of the princes of the House of Saxony, who held the sovereignty of Germany during the greater part of this century, fixed the Empire of the West in the German line; and though this empire was shorn of a large portion of territory towards the south, it never wholly lost its hold in Italy, though the struggle against German supremacy was often fiercely carried on by the Italians, and has continued to be so down to the present day.

There would be both amusement and profit in tracing more at large the great changes which were at this time operating in society and creating a new kind of civilisation; but when we make the attempt, we are met by insuperable difficulties.* The writings which remain to us

* "The end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh are involved in deeper obscurity than almost any other portion of history, both as regards France and the rest of Europe. Kings as well as people are lost in profound darkness. The small number of facts known appear to contradict each other, and all is doubt and confusion, without any link to connect one event with another. This darkness is the more striking, as it does not proceed, as in the seventh century, from universal barbarism: the manners of the time were some-

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are those of monks and ecclesiastics who knew scarcely anything beyond their own small neighbourhood, and could hardly have obtained, had they sought it, any other information. They are therefore full of inaccuracies and anachronisms; often contradictory, and afford but little information on the state of the people at large. No doubt much of this meagreness of detail was owing to the difficulty of intercommunication in a country overrun with robbers, through wastes or forests where wild beasts abounded, and where there was no shelter for the traveller save in lonely huts here and there, where not unfrequently those who sought shelter for the

what softened, civilisation had made some progress, and learned studies were attended to. The writers of the time, Radulphus Glaber, William of Jumièges, and especially Gerbert and Bishop Fulbert, evince something of philosophy, some taste in the choice and arrangement of materials, and some little spirit in the author, and acquaintance with good latinity. We feel that they belong to a people less foreign to us in opinions and manner than the Franks of the time of Clothaire or of Charlemagne; yet, nevertheless, we see little or nothing of the world in which they lived, and we do not succeed in making acquaintance with any of their contemporaries." —Sismondi. Hist. des Français, tom. iv. p. 80. Perhaps this is too sweeping a condemnation, but it is in the main well founded.

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night were murdered for the sake of the property they had about them. Thus the journeying from one place to another was perilous, and therefore rare, and writing was too uncommon an accomplishment to make intercourse by letter at all frequent.* Very few of those men, who could handle a pen, were able to write grammatically; as those who have been wont to study the chronicles of these times will at once testify: and though both Charlemagne and Alfred had complained of the illiterateness of the priests and monks, no less than of that of the laity, and had instituted schools to remedy the evil, endeavouring by their own example to revive the taste for literature, the circumstances of the succeeding age had rendered their endeavours in great measure unavailing.

One great exception, indeed, to this general

* Skill in writing was so exclusively an ecclesiastical accomplishment, that even to this day we call a man whose time is devoted to writing a *clerk* (*clericus*). When the great lords of the middle ages had to transact business by letter, a clerk or clergyman, therefore, was employed to write, and perhaps to read the epistle when it arrived. Nothing of a very private nature could be thus communicated; and the only letters of interest are those of bishops and abbots who could write and read their own.

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condemnation is to be found in Gerbert, first employed as secretary by various great lords, and afterwards raised to the papal dignity by the name of Sylvester II. But it was not in the schools of France or Italy that he gained his learning: free from the bigotry of his age, he sought it where it was then alone to be found; among the musselmans of Spain.* At Cordova

* The account given by William of Malmsbury of his studies is curious, and a good specimen of the prejudices of the time, which utterly travestied the very nature and object of the sciences. At Cordova "he learnt," says the chronicler, "what the singing and the flight of birds portended; there he acquired the art of calling up spirits from hell; in short, whatever human curiosity has discovered, either hurtful or salutary. He resided with a certain philosopher . . . whose goodwill he had gained . . who lent him books to transcribe. There was however one volume, containing the knowledge of his whole art, which he could never by any means entice him to lend. In consequence, Gerbert burnt with anxious desire to obtain this book at any rate. . . . When he failed, he tried a stratagem. Attacking him with wine, his daughter conniving at the attempt . . . he stole the book from under his pillow and fled. Waking suddenly, the Saracen pursued the fugitive by the direction of the stars, in which art he was well versed. The fugitive too, looking back and discovering his danger by means of the same art, hid himself under a wooden bridge; clinging to it, and hanging in such a manner as to touch neither earth nor water. In this manner the eagerness

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he studied astronomy and mathematics, and as much more of natural philosophy as they were able to teach: and returned to France imbued with sciences which procured him the reputation of a necromancer, and which, but for the imperial favour, might have been fatal to him. It is affirmed by William of Malmsbury, who lived about a century later, that there was still to be seen in the cathedral of Reims, "a clock con-

of the pursuer being eluded, he returned home. Gerbert then quickening his pace, arrived at the sea-shore. Here, by his incantations calling up the devil, he makes an agreement with him to be under his dominion for ever if he would defend him from the Saracen, who was again pursuing, and transport him to the opposite coast; this was accordingly done. . . . Otho, emperor of Italy, after his father, made Gerbert archbishop of Ravenna, and, finally, Roman pontiff. He followed up his fortune so successfully by the assistance of the devil, that he left nothing unexecuted which he had once conceived. The treasures formerly buried by the inhabitants he discovered by the arts of necromancy; and removing the rubbish, applied to his own lusts He cast for his own purposes the head of a statue, by a certain inspection of the stars when all the planets were about to begin their courses, which spake not unless spoken to, but then pronounced the truth in the affirmative or negative. For instance, when Gerbert would say, "Shall I be pope?" the statue would reply, "Yes." "Am I to die ere I sing mass at Jerusalem?" "No." It is said he was

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structed by him on mechanical principles and an hydraulic organ, in which the air escaping in a surprising manner by the force of heated water, fills the cavity of the instrument, and the brazen pipes emit modulated tones through the multifarious apertures." This is evidently an application of the force of steam which, had men's minds been more advanced, might have led to great results: as things were, it served

so much deceived by this, that he thought nothing of repentance; flattering himself with the prospect of a very long life: for when would he think of going to Jerusalem to accelerate his own death? Nor did he know that there was at Rome a church called Jerusalem—the pope sings mass there on three Sundays. Wherefore upon one of these days, as Gerbert was preparing himself for mass, he was struck with sickness . . . calling the cardinals together, he lamented his crimes for a long space of time. They being struck with sudden fear, and unable to make any reply; and he raving and losing his reason through excess of pain, commanded himself to be maimed and cast forth piecemeal; saying, "Let him have the service of my limbs who before sought their homage; for my mind never consented to that oath, nay, that abomination." Such is the fate of him who dares to be before his time: he must not look for justice till after centuries of calumny: but though it be bestowed late, it *will* be awarded by the sure judgment of posterity, as surely as progress towards good is the law of man's existence.

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only to fill the page of a chronicle with marvels, and this mighty agent had to be re-discovered. "The sciences of arithmetic and astronomy, music and geometry, which had been long obsolete in Gaul," says this writer, "he revived with great perseverance; and being certainly the first who seized on the abacus, (arithmetical notation), from the Saracens, gave rules which are scarcely understood, even by laborious computers."

Nothing could be more remote from our notions of sovereignty than the petty kings who at this time nominally ruled in the quondam empire of Charlemagne: and when the last king of that race was removed from the throne of France, A. D. 991, and an usurper, Hugh Capet, Count of Paris, mounted the throne, the change caused no national disturbance. The usurper died, and his son succeeded him quietly, though the deposed monarch had sons; for the crown was no longer worth contending for.* Nor

* "The nature of the courts of kings at this time may be considered as a farther cause of the obscurity of history. National and regal power had been simultaneously annihilated: all distant relations had ceased, and Europe generally felt no interest in what exercised no influence on its general destiny. During the first seven or eight

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were the bishops in a much better condition than the sovereigns. The progress of feudal institutions in this century had equally robbed them of their power; for as the episcopal domain became subjected to the supremacy of the duke or count in whose demesne it was situated, the feudal lord claimed the right of appointing to the see. If it was a rich one, some near relation was chosen; or failing of this, it was not unfre-

years of the reign of Robert II. (the son of Hugh Capet) the royal authority was so completely destroyed in France, that the details of the king's life would give no notion of the administration of the country. In the kingdom of Arles, which comprehended nearly a third of France, the king, Rodolph III. was no less a stranger to the government. He travelled from convent to convent in Switzerland, with a few knights, his attendants, and forgot in debauchery the authority he had lost. Ardoin, Marquis of Ivrea, who was crowned King of Italy after the death of Otho III. led nearly a similar life in the convents of Piedmont; and although his title to the throne was disputed by a rival, he did not attempt or even hope to assemble an army to maintain his rights. The throne of Germany alone appeared to preserve any dignity.... In England the contests of Ethelred II. with the Danes and the Swedes; in Spain the struggle of Sancho III. king of Navarre, against the Moors, seem to belong to a separate world: the rest of the western states no longer communicated with either the English or the Spaniards, and seemed to take no interest in their contests."—Sismondi, Hist. des Français, tom. iv. p. 84.

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quently put up to sale, and given to the highest bidder. Thus the ecclesiastical character lost the respect both of the people and the nobles, and even the forms of religion fell into desuetude.

We have seen that the change of system which took place in the social arrangements of continental Europe towards the beginning of this century had at first appeared to meet the needs of the people; at least we hear of no insurrection, or complaint even, during the early part of this period; and even the free settlers in Normandy seem to have been well satisfied with the rule of their lords. But these rude leaders of a piratical horde where all were at liberty to plunder alike, when they became feudal lords grew jealous of their privileges; and their followers were depressed to the condition of serfs. This change was not borne patiently by men whose grandfather, perhaps, had fought with Rollo, and shared equally in his dangers and his good fortune: and when Richard II. the great grandson of that leader, succeeded his father, the youth of the new duke probably tempted the people to endeavour to lighten a yoke which was every year becoming heavier. About A.D. 997 therefore, "while he was yet

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quite a youth, troubles arose in the interior of the duchy. In several counties of Normandy the peasants by common consent formed a number of societies, in which they resolved to live after their own fancy, and be governed by their own laws, as well in the depths of the forest as in the neighbourhood of the waters,* without conforming to any custom previously established. And in order that these arrangements might be the better observed, each of these societies chose two deputies, who were to be the bearers of their respective resolutions, that they might be confirmed in a general assembly, held in a central spot. As soon as the duke was informed of this, he sent Count Raoul with a number of knights, in order to repress this attempt on the part of the country people, and to dissolve the assembly. Raoul executed his orders without delay; and seizing the deputies, and some other men, he cut off their hands and their feet, and sent them home in this state, disabled for life; in order that the sight of what had happened to them might deter others from similar acts, and by

* This was in fact a claim to be allowed to supply themselves with fuel, building materials, and food: for wild animals and fish must at this time have been abundant.

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rendering them more prudent, preserve them from worse evils. Having seen these things, the peasants gave up their assemblies, and returned to their ploughs"*—and thus ended, for the time, the first struggle for human rights on the part of the labouring population, which, as far as we know, had taken place since the old republican days of Greece and Rome. It was an unsuccessful one on this occasion; but the spirit was roused which was never wholly to sleep again. The slave had been left without any feeling of country or right sufficiently strong to induce him to defend what he was not permitted to enjoy, and ruin to all classes had followed. This was at length perceived, and that the inhabitants might have something to fight for they were allowed to possess something, though the least that was possible: but then arose the natural wish in the breast of the serf to possess somewhat more; and this the feudal lord was not disposed to give, and the monk, the servant of Christ, proh pudor! sees nothing in the barbarity exercised on these unhappy people but a just exertion of seignoral power. The whole is but the old tale of all servile wars.

* Guillelmi Gemetecensi Monachi Historia Normannorum, lib. v.

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It is impossible, excepting under a system which so completely brutifies the man as to divest him of all reasoning power, to prevent him from feeling that the capacities for enjoyment bestowed upon him by his Creator, are a part of the rights of his nature. This is so self-evident a proposition that the meanest rustic can understand it; the greatest philosopher cannot gainsay it; and those social arrangements alone can be either abstractedly good, or even expedient, which guarantee these rights. Whole classes are seldom disinterested; it would therefore be vain on most occasions to appeal to generosity, did the granting of rights to one class imply any sacrifice on the part of another; but happily for mankind, interest and right are synonymous if well understood. The lords who compelled the people to go back to their ploughs, by perpetuating their ignorance and degradation, delivered them over to superstition, and made them the ready tools of a grasping sacerdotal caste, which soon began to wrestle with the secular power, and finally trampled upon it: and those ploughs which they were not allowed to quit for a day, were so ill managed in consequence, that the land was comparatively unproductive, and famine and pestilence, now almost

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unknown in Europe, were then of common occurrence.* Yet the arguments used in the days of Richard of Normandy have been repeated ever since; and we have not yet ceased to cry out that the people "will be above their work" if we raise them higher in the scale of being.

* A. D. 994, "a terrible pestilence ravaged the Limousin and Aquitaine. The contagion was increased by the ill-judged devotion of the people, who perpetually assembled round the churches, and brought their sick thither in order that they might be cured by the relics kept in the sanctuary. . . . The church of Saint Martial at Limoges was the one in which the sick congregated in the greatest numbers. Those who approached it perceived from some distance the horrible fœtor which exhaled from the dying creatures there assembled: but this warning was not sufficient to deter crowds of the faithful from constantly repairing thither in the hope of seeing a miracle. The greater part of the bishops of Aquitaine were of the number, carrying with them the relics from their own churches. The dukes and princes of the country, struck with horror, bound themselves by a sort of treaty among each other, to observe peace and justice as means of turning away the wrath of God."—Sismondi, Hist. des Français, tom. iv. p. 77.

Had the lords allowed their peasantry to enjoy more of the common rights of human nature the pestilence probably would never have been generated: and had the people been more rational, the infection would not have been thus fearfully propagated. Every age shows the evils of ignorance; will the lesson always be wasted?

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Every age has had its prophets of evil, foretelling danger from change, yet the gradual industrial progress of the race in the face of all this so-called dangerous instruction, might convince the most decided alarmist that true knowledge is never dangerous, and that if false views are occasionally taken up by the half-learned, the best cure for their errors is to afford them the means of cultivating that gift of reason which is not more the property of the rich than of the poor.

As we approach modern times, and every country has its independent history, the task of tracing political events becomes more and more difficult in so short a summary as this must necessarily be. I must therefore content myself with merely indicating a few of those great movements which have influenced permanently the destiny of mankind, and devote my chief attention to the state of the people at large: the fate and the doings of princes will be found sufficiently detailed in larger histories. Leaving, therefore, the energetic and conquering princes of the house of Saxony to found an empire which has stood the shocks of a thousand years, I turn rather to trace the course of civilisation under the weak Robert of France, and his turbulent nobility; among whom the consequences of the

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new system were rapidly developing themselves.

"The progress of the arts and of commerce had been much more rapid in the counties of Languedoc and Provence than in the north of France. The Saracens who had reached their highest degree of refinement in Spain, frequented the ports of the Mediterranean, and carried thither their merchandise. Habits of luxury were introduced in the castles of the nobles: they gave splendid entertainments, and in their courts of love, where by degrees the taste for poetry and music was forming itself, the gentlemen of the south were already engaged in the service of their ladye love while those of the north were only thinking of battle;" and in the court of Arles, and the castles of the Counts of Provence, that language by degrees formed itself which we have since termed romance, or provençal, and which was very soon distinguished as the especial language of song.

The innovations made by the gentry of the south, both in dress and manners, were exceedingly distasteful to those who had not the means of equal luxury, and as usual were imputed to them as sins. "About the year 1000," says Radulphus Glaber, a contemporary monk,

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" when king Robert had married Constance, a princess of Aquitaine; the favour of the queen attracted into France and Burgundy many of the natives of that province and of Auvergne. These vain coxcombs were full of affectation, both in their manners and their dress. Their arms and the equipment of their horses were neglected and strange, their hair short, and they shaved the beard like mountebanks. Their boots and trousers were indecent, and in short there was neither faith nor dependence on their word to be expected from them. Alas! the nation of the Franks hitherto so well conducted, and even the people of Burgundy, followed eagerly these criminal examples; and very soon they rivalled their teachers in perversity and infamy: and if some monk or man fearing God should attempt to blame such conduct, he was treated as a madman. At length a man of incorruptible faith and resolution, father William, Abbot of St. Benigne, banishing all worldly deference, and abandoning himself to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, reproached the king and queen severely for permitting such improprieties in their kingdom, so long famed among all others for its attachment to honour and religion. Besides this, he addressed such

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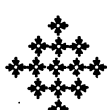
severe remonstrances to the lords of inferior rank, that the chief of them submitting to his authority removed these frivolous fashions, and returned to the ancient habit. The holy abbot thought he saw in these innovations the very finger of Satan; and he affirmed that a man who quitted the earth in this livery of the devil, would have great difficulty in escaping from his power. However others persevered in these new fashions." *

The fashion which gave so much offence then, was the parent of our modern dress: for the antique costume which the good abbot was so anxious to preserve was, as far as we can judge from illuminated MSS., hair falling long on the shoulders, and a belted robe or gown descending nearly to the ankle. However as the manners of the Franks of the former age were far from being such as to justify the encomium of the holy abbot, we must conclude that the offence given by these cavaliers of the south was a more serious one than that of wearing short and tight fitting garments instead of long and loose ones; and we shall probably find it in the free spirit of enquiry which spread

* Radulphi Glabri Chron. lib. iii. 9.

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from Spain through the southern provinces. All the learning of Europe at that time was to be found among the Musselmans of Spain, and thither all who wished to acquire any knowledge of science resorted for instruction. In no age have the large pretensions of the sacerdotal order, and the progress of the human mind been found in accordance; and we shall soon have occasion to notice that the cultivation of science had had its wonted effect, and that the provençal gentry questioned too freely to suit the taste of their spiritual rulers.



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CHAPTER VIII.

State of Christianity during the Tenth Century.

BARBARISM and ignorance had at last done their work, and at the beginning of the tenth century even the forms of the Christian faith were almost forgotten in the Western Church. Only here and there a so-called saint might be found, whose sanctity was measured rather by the extent of his self-mortification, than by the practice of the gentle Christian virtues. In the east, under the patronage of Leo VI. surnamed the Philosopher, and his son, Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, himself an author, somewhat more of learning was kept up, and there was somewhat less apparent rudeness of manners;* but the spirit of the gospel was

* I limit my expression purposely; for we have still extant the account given by Bishop Luitprand of his two embassies to Constantinople; the first about A. D.

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defunct, and the corruptions of doctrine and practice were scarcely less than in the sister

950, whilst Constantinus Porphyrogenitus was on the throne; the next, A. D. 968, when Nicephorus II. had been invested with the purple. The first time he was received with much honour, and gives a curious account of the splendour of the approach to the throne, before which a tree was placed, so mechanically contrived that among its brazen and gilded branches, birds of the same material moved and sang: lions that moved their tails and roared, duly guarded the approach; and many other wonders of art of the same kind astonished the simple envoy. The second time he was sent by the emperor Otho I. to demand a Greek princess in marriage for the emperor's son. The treatment of the ambassador reminds us of the court of Pekin.

"On the fourth of June," says the bishop in his report to the emperor, "we arrived at the golden gate; but were kept waiting with our horses, in the rain, till the eleventh hour. We were then consigned, by order of the Emperor Nicephorus, to a large marble palace; so open that it afforded no shelter from either cold or heat; and a guard of soldiers was placed at the gate so as to prevent my people from going out, or any others from coming in. The house was wholly without water, which we had to purchase and the person who had the charge of our entertainment practised upon us every sort of extortion and discourtesy." . . At first a dispute arose as to the title of emperor, which was refused to Otho by the Greek prince; the next day the emperor himself received the envoy, and complained that his master had taken possession of *his* city of Rome.

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churches of the west; nay, to make the resemblance the greater, there was the same attempt

The description given by the bishop of the frightful person of Nicephorus," with his courtly compliment to his own "beautiful emperor," I pass over, in order to give more at large the account of the feast. "Not thinking me worthy, it seems, to sit above any of his nobles," says the envoy, "I was placed the fifteenth from him, without a carpet, and none of my people were allowed to enter at all. When we had been some time at supper he questioned me as to your kingdom, army, &c.; to which, when I gave a proper answer, he said, 'You lie! The soldiers of your lord do not know how to ride, and are equally ignorant of the art of fighting on foot: the size of their shields, the weight of their armour, the length of their swords, the heaviness of their helmets, disqualifies them for fighting in either way;' and smiling, he added, 'The impediment is their gormandising, whose god is their belly, whose courage is debauch, whose valour, drunkenness, whose fasting, weakness, whose sobriety is fear. Neither has your lord a numerous fleet, whereas mine is most powerful; and where I attack with my ships, I demolish the cities on the shore, and reduce everything to ashes at the mouths of the rivers. Who is there that is able to resist the power of my innumerable armies?' And when I began to reply to this insolence as I ought, he interrupted me with a sneer, saying, 'You are not Romans, but Lombards.'" This was more than the bishop's spirit could bear; and he interrupted the emperor, notwithstanding that he attempted to impose silence on him, by observing, that the followers of Romulus were all the vaga-

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on the part of the patriarch of Constantinople to control the sovereign in those points in which

bonds of the country, "and it is from such noble blood that you emperors spring: so that when *we* wish to give an enemy an ill name, we call him *a Roman;* a name which we consider as expressing every possible degree of timidity, avarice, luxury, falsehood, and vice. As for our lack of skill in riding and warlike exercises, if the sins of Christians have deserved that you should hold in this mind, the coming war will show who is most capable in the shock of battle." The emperor made no reply, and soon dismissed the company. In the meantime the suite of the envoy, no less than he himself, became ill from the hardships they suffered. "How was it possible not to suffer in health," he writes, "when, instead of good wine, we have a mixture resembling brine to drink; when we have neither hay nor carpets to lie on, nay, not even an earthen floor, but hard marble, with a stone for a pillow, without shelter from heat, from rain, or from cold. In this state of debility," he continues, "I prevailed on my tormentor by entreaties, or rather by money, to deliver a letter to the emperor's brother." This letter contained a request that he might be permitted to leave Constantinople, where he met with nothing but ill usage. This led to somewhat more civility; and persons were appointed to confer with him on the subject of his embassy. They thus addressed him—"It is an unheard-of thing that a daughter born in the purple, from a father born in the purple, should be united to a foreigner; but as you ask so great a favour, if you give what is proper, it shall be granted. In that case you must give up Ravenna and Rome to us.

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a man is most sensitive, as had been made by the Roman pontiff in the case of Lothaire. It was, however, less successful. Leo VI. being still without an heir, after the death of his third wife proposed to take a fourth; but Nicolaus, the patriarch, not only refused to give the nuptial benediction, but suspended the priest who had done so from his office; stigmatizing such a marriage as absolute concubinage. What was the moral difference between a second, third, or fourth marriage, might puzzle a casuist to decide; however, the prelate was obstinate, and the emperor deposed and exiled him for his con-

But if you wish only for friendship, without a matrimonial alliance, reduce to our obedience the princes of Capua and Beneventum, our vassals, now in rebellion, and permit Rome to be free." The envoy replied, that *his* emperor had delivered Rome from an infamous slavery to a courtesan, when the court of Constantinople had done nothing; and reminded them that the emperor Christopher had given his daughter in marriage to the king of the Bulgarians. "But Christopher was not born in the purple," was the reply. After this, fresh indignities were offered, and resented with so much spirit by the bishop, that he was again treated with civility; and he was entertained with the sight of processions, ships, games, and hunting in preserves of wild animals, with many boastful intimations that he would see nothing like that at home. The whole was a series of puerile vaunts and insolence unworthy of any but semi-barbarians.

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tumacy, placing one Euthymius in his room. This made a schism in the church for a time, and after the death of Leo the party of Nicolaus was strong enough to procure his recall, and Euthymius was compelled publicly to resign the see. The scene which took place on the occasion was nearly as disgraceful as anything which could have been seen at Rome. "The clergy of the party of Nicolaus rushed upon him (Euthymius) as if he had been a wild beast, struck him, slapped his face, tore out his beard, and inflicted other injuries; calling him at the same time by the most opprobrious epithets; all which," continues the chronicler, "this good man bore with patience and equanimity." The bishop of Cæsarea, who also writes of the circumstance, laments that a scene "in which things were done too shameful to relate," should have been witnessed by the ambassadors of the caliph.*

The changes in the social arrangements of Europe brought about by the feudal system as it grew into a more definite form, began soon to be felt by the ecclesiastical body. In those states where it was adopted, the lands which had been at different times bestowed on churches

* V. Baron. Ann. Ecc. A. D. 901.

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and monasteries by the sovereign, became fiefs, held of the feudal superior: and if the regal power, as was the case in a large part of the former empire of Charlemagne, was too much weakened to maintain its rights, the great vassals, amid whose domains these lands were situated, claimed the power of nominating the bishop or abbot—a claim which, however ill grounded, could rarely be effectually opposed. The consequence of this was, that the benefices of the church were often appropriated to his own use by the feudal lord, and either given to a relation or sold to the highest bidder; so that, very generally, the most unfit men were placed in the offices of most importance. Nor were the bishops of Rome exempted from this degradation: whoever happened to be at the head of a sufficient armed force to overawe the city, placed his own creature in the papal chair, careless by what vices he might disgrace it. "What monsters were intruded into the holy see!" exclaims Cardinal Baronius in speaking of this period; "by what abominations was it not contaminated!" And this was no more than was to be expected when contending political parties sought rather for an active partisan than a conscientious bishop. Violence and disorder prevailed at Rome not less

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than elsewhere, and the men placed in the pontifical chair, sometimes by a feudal lord and sometimes by his mistress, were such as might be expected from the manner of their selection. A. D. 908 was again marked by shameful disturbances and factions in the Roman church:* Christopher, the pontiff elect, was violently expelled from his office by the other party, and cast into prison, and Sergius, a man of infamous character, was elevated to the pontificate. He owed his promotion to the favour of Theodora, a Roman lady of noble birth but most dissolute manners, who by the aid of the Marquis of Tusculum, who had put her in possession of the castle of St. Angelo, ruled the city, "non inviriliter," observes the historian.

There would be neither pleasure nor profit in tracing the life of this infamous woman, or her no less infamous daughters, and their paramours, who successively occupied the so-called chair of St. Peter:† our concern is rather with the state

* V. Bar. Ann. Ecc. in loc.

† "What was then the state of the holy church of Rome!" exclaims Cardinal Baronius; "how debased and defiled, when it was ruled by those potent but sordid courtesans, who at their will changed or gave away bishoprics; thrust their lovers into the seat of the Apos-

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of manners which could allow such scandals to exist for so long a period; for no attempt to remedy them appears to have been made till A.D. 962, when Otho I. visited Rome, and received the imperial crown from the hands of John XII. When first informed of the horrible disorders of this prelate, the emperor seems to have thought his conduct nothing very extraordinary, for he merely remarked, "He is young; with good advice he may mend:" † but when the pontiff lent himself to the political party opposed to the German supremacy, Otho came to Rome again, and after having heard the accusations in a full synod of bishops, deposed him from his office, and placed Leo VIII. in his room.‡

tle . . when the canons were neglected, the decrees of previous pontiffs suppressed, the ancient traditions and customs of election and the sacred rites wholly laid aside." This is the testimony of the apologist of the church of Rome. Will he venture to call these men *infallible* in matters of faith?

† Liutprandi Historia Ottonis.

‡ After the accusations had been brought forward, the emperor directed a letter to be written to John, informing him that charges had been made against him by the clergy and people of Rome so shameful "that they would have been thought unfit to be recited by an actor on the stage. . . Know," continues the emperor, "that you are accused not by a few only, but by nearly all,

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Such was the state of the Roman church in the first half of the tenth century; nor were the monasteries in a better state. The abbots, generally of noble family, followed the amusements and imitated the manners of the feudal nobility; and it was well if nothing worse than feasting and hunting filled their time. In a life of Count Bouchard, or Burckhardt, Count of Melun, by

both clergy and laity, of homicide, perjury, sacrilege, and incest with two sisters. . . . I pray you, do not delay to come to Rome, and purge yourself from these charges if possible. If you fear the violence of the people, I offer you a safe conduct, and my word and oath that you shall suffer nothing which the sacred canons do not authorize." The answer to this, which I give in its own barbarous Latin, is curious. "Johannes episcopus servus servorum Dei omnibus episcopis. Nos audiamus dicere quia vos vultis alium papam facere: si hoc facitis excommunico vos da (de) Deum omnipotentem, ut non habeatis licentiam nullum ordinare et missam celebrare." Upon the reception of this contumacious letter, the synod proceeded to depose him, and Leo was raised to the papal dignity in his room; but no sooner had the emperor dismissed a part of his army, than John was able, by a free distribution of money, to excite the Roman populace to attack both his rival pope and the emperor, who, but for the valour of his guards, would have been murdered. It is needless here to pursue the hateful tale of how the paramours of John accomplished his return to Rome: it may be read at length in Bishop Luitprand's life of Otho.

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a monk of the abbey of St. Maur des Fossés, near Paris,* we have an account of the state of this abbey when the count undertook to reform it, which I shall quote. "The abbey was at that time" (towards the end of the century) "ruled by Maynard, a nobleman of illustrious race, according to the dignities of this perishable world. He did not at all conform to the rule of our father St. Benedict; but, given up entirely to the world, he neglected the good both of souls and bodies. His pleasure consisted in the chase of wild animals, with either dogs or hawks, and when he went abroad he quitted the monastic habit, and put on magnificent clothing and precious furs; and in the room of the humble cowl, wore a rich cap. Those who were under his government followed his example as well as they could; nor must this be supposed a blame peculiar to this abbey; for all those in the kingdom pursued the same course."

The mode in which the count undertook the reform is characteristic. One man only among the inmates of the monastery had some qualms of conscience as to the life they were leading;

* The life appears to have been written about the middle of the following century.

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and he secretly applied to Bouchard, the nearest feudal lord. This happened to be a royal abbey; for some still remained under the jurisdiction of the crown, and the count therefore repaired to the king, and asked as a boon that he would concede to him the suzerainty of the abbey des Fossés. This the king refused, "For," said he, "it might happen that after your death your heirs might dissipate your property in debauchery, and *as there would be no means of enforcing justice*, the monks would suffer infinite damage, and the fault, if we granted this, would be ours, to the great hurt of our soul." The count unable to obtain his first request, asked leave to restore and amend the abbey, and this was granted.

At this time the Benedictine rule had been adopted in the abbey of Clugni; and after its introduction A. D. 910, by Abbot Berno, it was kept up with spirit by his successors. St. Mayeul or Majolus was just then the Abbot of this monastery, and to him count Bouchard repaired. The good abbot was astonished, and asked why he came to him rather than apply to some nearer neighbour, adding that it was "a perilous enterprise to go into foreign and unknown regions." Clugni was near Macon in

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Burgundy, and we may judge from this, how small the communication was at this time between places by no means very distant from each other. The count however would take no refusal, and the holy man at length consented to accompany him with several of his monks. Hereupon the count invited the abbot Maynard and his monks to meet him at some distance from the monastery, and when they came, told them plainly that those who would be content to live under the government of the Abbot Mayeul might return to the abbey, the rest might go whither they would. "This made them very sad, but they preferred their own ways to the living in the Abbey with a superior and monks of whom they knew nothing. They departed, therefore, with nothing but the clothes they wore; but Abbot Maynard being, as before said, of noble birth, was transferred to another abbey, which he governed to the day of his death."

The reform of an abbey was not always so quietly submitted to; nor would it have been so in this case probably, had Count Bouchard been less powerful. When Abbot Odo of Clugni, about forty years before, endeavoured to introduce the benedictine rule at Fleury, the monks

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then living there in a disorderly state, offered a fierce opposition, even to the use of weapons at first; though afterwards he succeeded in establishing the discipline of the monastery so completely that monks of Fleury were frequently employed in reforming others. The Benedictine rule then became widely spread, wherever any amendment of life was proposed; and we can hardly wonder that when the daily life of all appeared to be made up of violence, rapaciousness and intemperance wherever it was possible, and brutish ignorance every where, the self-denial, peaceable demeanour, and higher cultivation of those Benedictines who really conformed to the founder's rule, should have been regarded with no ordinary admiration, even though their observances might be superstitious, and their erudition small. The title of *saint*, and the homage of great and small followed; and ambition for such a distinction supplied a motive strong enough to make even worldly minded men sometimes take this road to greatness.

Probably we must reckon among this number the famous Dunstan of Glastonbury; who, after professing himself a monk at Fleury, returned to England full of zeal for the reform of

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monasticism there. Before this it would appear that the churches and monasteries had been in the hands of married priests and canons; Dunstan, with the energy of a strong, though misdirected mind, determined on establishing a stricter rule; partly perhaps influenced by the habits he had himself fallen into while resident at Fleury, and partly also by the feeling that the regular monk was a better tool in the hands of his ecclesiastical superior than the secular priest; and it is evident that Dunstan had early aspired to the highest honours of the church; a situation in which he might find their services useful. The change from easy duties and domestic comfort, to wearisome observances and privations was not pleasant, and the necessity of it might also well be doubted; Dunstan's plans, therefore, met with considerable opposition. When the historians were themselves monks, it is not easy to arrive at the truth; but it appears that when, after the death of Edred, Edwy came to the throne, a youth of sixteen only; the party of the married priests recovered courage, and perhaps hoped for the support of the king; for Dunstan at once began a system of insolent resistance to the royal authority, not to be accounted for by any conscientious

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scruples;—for he was but too indulgent to the moral offences of Edwy's successor;—and which seemed rather intended to put down opposition from smaller men by showing his power even over the monarch. The marriage of Edwy with a lady who came within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, gave a pretext, and the murder of the unhappy Elgiva and the deposition and death of Edwy, secured for the unscrupulous monk the triumph of his party: not however without a struggle, which, had the monarch been of more mature age, would perhaps have ended differently: for Edwy, indignant at the treatment which Elgiva * had received, banished Dunstan, and drove out the regular monks from Glastonbury, of which

* The tale may be found in Sharon Turner's history of the Anglo Saxons. The monkish historians stigmatize her as the *concubine* of the king; but this term was freely applied by them in the case of marriages against the rules of the church: but be that as it may, nothing could justify the cruelty of the proceeding. She was torn from the king's arms, branded in the face, imprisoned, and when she escaped, arrested again and hamstrung, of which injuries she died. The short summing up of the reign of Edwy by Ethelwerd, a contemporary, excites indignation at the treatment he received from the party of Dunstan.—"Tenuit quadrennio per regnum *amandus*"—says the chronicler.

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Dunstan was abbot, and the one or two other abbeys where the Benedictine rule had been introduced. But he was too inexperienced to contend with a crafty and resolute man; and his brother Edgar having been induced to join the other party, after a four years' contest, they succeeded in their views. Edgar succeeded to the throne; and now, by Dunstan's care, "there arose in all the island religious monasteries; the altars of the saints were loaded with the precious metals, and the splendour of the buildings was not disgraced by the life of those who constructed them,"* writes the monk of Malmsbury, though if this were so, the reform was but of short duration, as will appear from his own account of their state at the invasion of the Normans. As in the case of the abbey des Fossés at a later period, the offer was made to the clergy of many churches that they should either "change their habit," i. e. adopt the Benedictine,—"or quit the place and make way for better men:" and this change was the more readily wrought as Odo, the archbishop of Canterbury during the earlier part of Dun-

* Willelmi Malmsburiensis De Gestis Pontif. Aug. lib. i.

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stan's career, had also embraced the monastic life at Fleury, and was no less firm in his determination to establish a severer ecclesiastical discipline.

Edgar, the brother and successor of Edwy, seems to have been glad to propitiate those who had shown themselves too strong for regal control, by ample gifts to monasteries and churches; and there are abundance of charters which date from his reign. The Benedictine rule was established in almost all; and the cause of monasticism triumphed. Dunstan was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury A. D. 961, and soon after, Athelwold, another zealous monk, was raised to the bishopric of Winchester. "The second year after his consecration," observes the Saxon chronicle, "he founded many monasteries, and he drove out the clergy because they would not observe his rule"—probably this alludes to the married priests—"and placed monks in their room. Afterwards he went to king Edgar and desired of him that he would give him all the monasteries which the heathen had destroyed, for that he would restore them; and the king willingly granted his request . . . Afterwards bishop Athelwold came to the monastery that is called Medhamstede, which had

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been destroyed by the heathen, and he found nothing there but old walls and wild woods"—which however in his hands soon gave place to a handsome fabric, with large immunities; for it was granted to it by charter that it should be "perpetually free from every secular concern and servitude, so that no ecclesiastic or laic should claim any control over it or its abbot... but that the said abbot, with the family of Christ under his care . . . should remain for ever free from every mundane yoke, and all episcopal taxation," &c. Then follows the gift of various villages and lands, "with their markets and tolls, so that neither king nor count nor bishop, nor lesser person should claim any dominion there," &c. This bears date A. D. 970, and is signed by the king first, then by the two archbishops, and these are followed by the lay ministers of the king, and other bishops and abbots. "King Edgar," says Ingulphus the abbot of Croyland, "being wisely instructed by the blessed Dunstan, and the rest of the holy bishops, every where repressed the ungodly . . . restored the destroyed churches of God, put a stop to the stupid songs of the clergy in the convents, by introducing the chorus of monks and holy men in the praise of the divine name,

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and raised more than forty-eight monasteries in different parts of the kingdom." The exemption from the bishop's jurisdiction, however, which was granted to Medhamstede, Malmsbury, and some others, according to Ingulphus, make it doubtful whether the prelates in general were as yet won over to the cause of monasticism.

It would be vain to seek for any elucidation of church doctrine among the meagre and barbarous writers of this century: we have only to notice its corruptions, which were fast approaching their height. Even those who were most sensible of the moral canker which was eating into the very heart of Christianity, did not seem to perceive that the perversion of its doctrine had a large share in causing the evils complained of. We have no more lively picture of the abominable license of the times than that given by Ratherius bishop of Verona, whose animadversions on the conduct of monks and clergy brought him into frequent difficulties,* yet we

* He visited Rome about A.D. 950, to seek redress for some of the persecution he had suffered, and has left an account of immoralities he witnessed among the clergy from the highest to the lowest, which from the very nature of the enormities cannot be here repeated.

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find very little of the genuine doctrine of Christ in his writings, and the prayer he recommends for daily use, begins thus—"Save us, omnipotent God, and *through the merits and intercession of Mary the holy mother of God, and of all the saints*, be merciful to us," &c. He blames those who understand the phrase, "the body of our Lord Jesus Christ" in the eucharist, in a figurative sense, and insists on the reality of the change into blood and flesh,* arguing curiously

* "Crede frater quia sicut in Cana Galilææ, vinum, Dei imperio, verum et non figurativum fuit ex aqua factum, ita istud Dei benedictione vinum, verus et non figurativus efficitur sanguis, et caro panis. Quod si sapor idem manet et color ita se haberi dissuadent tibi aliud, credis auctoritati Scripturæ quæ dicit hominem de limo terræ formatum? Non dubito credere te responsurum. Nosti præterea dictum *Pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris?*—Novi, reor, ais et credo ita esse. Ergo pulvis est homo quem coram vides et cinis. Est utique, inquis quia de limo est factus. Quæ igitur hæc figura limi? Nulla: terram potius vocitem. Terræ aliqua? Non aliqua, et tamen terra est. Quid de limi figura? transfigurata est operantis sapientiâ, manet tamen substantia!—Manet. Ita ergo et hic manente colore atque sapore, eâdem sapientiâ operante, veram carnem et sanguinum quod percepis esse crede, sicut e contra mutatâ hominis specie hominis creatione, limi tamen substantiam manere non diffiteris." Ratherii Ep. vi. Spicil. Veter. Script. Tom. i. p. 376. Paris 1723.

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enough, that though in this case neither our taste nor our sight give any indication of the change, yet this is no more than is seen every day with regard to the very frame of man himself; whom we believe to be made of earth, notwithstanding that it is not perceivable to our senses. The argument was a plausible one in an age when organic chemistry was unknown.

It was not wonderful, when spiritualism in religion was so far lost sight of, that even the spiritual nature of the Deity should become unintelligible; accordingly we find this prelate complaining that the old heresy of the Anthropomorphites was revived in his diocese, and that a considerable number both of priests and people in the neighbourhood of Vicenza, believed in the corporeality of God. "Oh shame!" continues he indignantly; "some of our priests even, murmur and say,—'what are we to do? up to this time we thought we knew something of God, but now it seems that he is nothing; if he has no head, no eyes, no ears, no hands, no feet"—and they appear to have completed their picture by figuring him "as a king seated on a golden throne, with a militia of angels like winged men in white dresses, *such as were wont to be seen upon the walls.*"—Yet the bishop could not see

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that these pictures on the walls, which had so long formed the sole instruction of the people, had given rise to these animalised notions. They had not been taught to worship in spirit: they had been taught to know God only in a visible form: what wonder that their imagination could reach no higher than those "holy images" which had been placed before them as objects of worship?

I have already observed, when quoting from the sermon of S. Eligius, that the corruption of the faith arose more from the attaching an undue value to overt acts, and visible ceremonies, as compared with inward motives, and mental dispositions, than from any intentional abandonment of the truth of the gospel. In his views the giving money to the poor, the making oblations on the altar, and the careful attendance on all ceremonies of the church were placed on a level with the moral virtues, and even these were measured by the act, rather than the thought which gave rise to the act. Far other had been the teaching of Christ, who directed his precepts to the purification of the motives and the wishes from which the actions spring: and the bishop of Noyon had already, perhaps unconsciously, begun to depart from the fundamental principle

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of the gospel, that the outward act is but the overflowing of the inward corruption, and that therefore the man who only abstains from it through dread of punishment, whilst his thoughts remain unpurified, has not attained to a christian disposition. Every addition to outward ceremonies, every inculcation of the value of salvation of mere outward acts, lessened the spiritualism of religion, and paved the way for that wide spread corruption, which at this period seems to have involved the whole christian world; and from which it only began to emerge some centuries later: a corruption in which the church of the past was so deeply steeped, that we must rather pray to the Lord of all to aid in effacing its stain, than congratulate ourselves on having yet prepared the spotless garment which is to clothe the church of the future.



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CHAPTER IX.

The Eleventh Century.

AFTER the wearisome toil of attempting to trace our way through the darkness of the tenth century, it is some satisfaction to find ourselves cheered by some few rays of light betokening the dawn of an age of less obscurity. The writers of the period we are now entering upon, though still wanting in precision, and demanding much caution in sifting their narratives, are at least circumstantial; and if they do not give us the absolute truth of history, give us at least what is perhaps as valuable,—the mode of thinking of the times;—and we begin to see what manner of men they were who lived, and felt, and acted, at the period in question.

The tenth century had given rise to the feudal system from the necessities of the times; and now over the greater part of the continent of Europe, in the countries which had shown only crumbling and blackened walls, uncultivated

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wastes, and unburied corpses, which the miserable remaining inhabitants scarcely thought it needful to bury,—castles of more or less size and grandeur with their little village attached, had sprung up on all sides: the fields were once more cultivated, and in the forests and wastes, which were still extensive, bands of mounted cavaliers, richly equipped, took the diversion of hunting with a spirit which showed, even in this mimic war, how formidable they would be to an enemy in the field. It is not easy to say when it was that these cavaliers were first recognised as a separate order of men,* but we find the institution so distinctly marked about a century later, when the feudal system was in full opera-

* "The historian is met by difficulties of all sorts when he wishes to trace the origin and progress of chivalry. He finds himself on the debateable land between truth and fiction; and sometimes he is deceived by poets and romancers who transport him into the region of imagination, at other times he is equally deceived by chroniclers, whose dry souls were incapable of conceiving even the events passing under their eyes, if fancy and sentiment had any share in them. If he looks for the first manifestations of the new spirit which created the order of chivalry, he is deceived by the antiquaries of every age, who always strive to remove to a greater distance the origin of the institution they treat of."—Sismondi Hist. des Français, Tom. iv. p. 193.

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tion, that it seems fair to conclude that it owed its origin mainly to that mode of tenure. Probably he who held land enough to be called on to serve on horseback fully armed, was held to belong to an especial order, superior to that which could only enter the field on foot, and with arms of an inferior description.* This distinction was one known both to the Greeks and the Romans; but it was unmixed with any religious ceremony, and depended merely on what we should term, the rateable property: but when Christianity became the established form of worship, the vague feeling of immortality which it engendered even in the rudest breasts, naturally made the moment of danger that in which its sanctions and its comforts were the most sought. Even the superstition which had in great measure taken the place of vital christianity, rendered this feeling still stronger; and a weapon which had received the sacerdotal blessing was probably thought to do its work more surely: nor would even the conscientious chris-

* The mode of submission to an offended feudal superior also points at this: The culprit knight *took a saddle on his shoulders*, and knelt at the feet of his lord. V. Willelmi Gemeticens. Hist. Norman. lib. v. c. 16, and lib. vi. c. 4.

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tian teacher be unwilling to seize the opportunity of impressing the young warrior with a serious feeling of the duties of his profession and his station. Probably from all these causes a set of symbolical rites were by degrees adopted to sanctify the first arming of the knight for his new career; and though the courtesy and the virtues of chivalry never were such as modern romancers have dreamed of;—though the good knight of old was cruel and licentious on many occasions, and seldom curbed his passions when his blood was up, or his interest concerned;—still the promises made when he first put on his spurs as a youth, and the ceremonies of his initiation, had a certain influence on his mind, and tended somewhat to soften the rude manners of a rude age: and he who had probably never learned or thought of the benevolent precepts of the Saviour, might sometimes remember that the protection of his sword was vowed to the weak, and that certain actions were held dishonourable by his fellows, and by the ladies of whom he was the vowed servitor.

William de Jumiege, who dedicates his work to William the Conqueror, and consequently wrote before A. D. 1087, speaks of the knights attending on different lords in a tone which

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makes it clear that they were at that time a recognised order; and some circumstances which he records, seem to justify us in supposing that it was so a century earlier. Nevertheless the assassinations, breaches of faith, and crimes of all sorts which knights were guilty of, according to this contemporary writer,* make it apparent that the *virtue* of chivalry, like that of Greece and Rome, was merely physical courage; and that even if the same religious engagement as is de-

* "Thibant comte de Chartres had quarrelled with duke Richard I. of Normandy (the grandson of Rollo) and after some warfare between them, the count engaged the queen on his side, and a conference was proposed, in which it was intended to seize on the person of Richard. As the duke was on his way to the place appointed, he met two of Thibant's knights. One of them accosted him, and said, 'Most illustrious of men, whither are you going? Do you really wish to be duke of Normandy, or had you rather be a keeper of sheep at a distance from your duchy?'—Having said this, he was silent, and the duke said 'Whose knights are you!'—and the other replied, 'What is it to you whose knights we are? are we not your knights?' The duke now guessed that these words were a salutary warning; and determined to profit by it. He accordingly took leave of these knights with all honour, and in token of his gratitude, presented to one a brilliant sword, whose golden hilt weighed four pounds, and to the other a golden bracelet of the same weight: then turning back in all haste, he

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scribed by later writers* took place; it was, at any rate, not more regarded than that at baptism, and that the *preux chevalier*,—if not altogether an invention of the romancers of a later age,—was an individual, rather than a general character,—the result of the struggle between the fierce spirit engendered by the continual warfare carried on that time, and the milder spirit of the gospel; which, however defaced and overlaid by neglect and superstition, still raised its voice occasionally. The command to love our enemies, is at variance with the laws of war which bid us kill them: the attempt therefore to reconcile the necessity of self-defence with the law of love, in minds where better feeling predominated, seems to have given rise to those courtesies of

entered Rouen safe and sound."—This anecdote, with many others, the writer professes to have received from Count Raoul, brother of this duke Richard. The conduct of these knights had certainly much of the honorable feeling which belonged to the best specimens of chivalry, neither betraying their master nor serving his base passions. This took place before the accession of Hugh Capet.

* The forms used in conferring knighthood are given in an old poem entitled "Ordene de chevalerie" par Hue de Tabaria, written in the thirteenth century but supposed to be translated from an earlier work. V. Sismondi Hist. des Français, Tom. iv, p. 201.

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war towards enemies, and that consecration of arms to the service of God and the church, which might best seem to bring the two into accordance.*

* The following account of the origin of the Abbey of Bec, taken from the work by William de Jumiége above quoted, is too curious to be past over. It gives the character of an accomplished cavalier of the eleventh century, by a contemporary; and shows the very mode of thinking of the time.

"About this time (A. D. 1034) the lord Abbot Herluin, renouncing the secular life at the age of forty, received the holy dress of a monk from Herbert bishop of Lisieux; and was afterwards ordained priest and Abbot by this same prelate He was especially skilled in the use of arms, and showed himself endowed with a rare courage. All the great families of Normandy considered him as one of their most distinguished knights, and celebrated his knowledge in all the affairs of chivalry, no less than the elegance of his person. He turned away his heart from all that was improper, and sought with ardour all that is honourable and worthy of praise in courts: nor could he bear to be other than the most distinguished among all his companions, in arms, and in affairs, whether at home, or in matters of chivalry In this very agreeable position he had already past the age of thirty-seven, when his heart being seized with fear, became inflamed with divine love, and began to detach itself more and more from the love of this world. Turning his eyes away from exterior things, he turned them inward on himself, went to church oftener, prayed devoutly, and often melted into tears."—In this mood he

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From the same causes, probably, sprung those military pilgrimages which were now becoming common; and which ultimately led to the crusades. When a monarch like Charlemagne

asked, and at last obtained, an unwilling leave from his lord to devote himself and all that he possessed to holy purposes, "He then undertook to raise for the service of God at Bonneville, a building which, though by no means a small one, was soon finished; for not only did he himself preside at the work, but he put his own hand to it, digging foundations, emptying ditches, carrying stones, sand, and lime on his shoulders, and afterwards mixing these materials to build the walls. At the hours when the others went away, he brought all the things necessary for carrying on the work; and did not give himself a moment's rest all day. The more fastidious he had been before in the vanity of his pride, the more he showed himself then humble and patient; supporting all fatigues for the love of God. Only when he had finished his day's work did he take his simple meal, which was neither abundant in quantity, nor choice in quality; not to mention those days when it is not permitted to eat at all. He learned the first rudiments of letters when he was already near forty years old; and, assisted by the grace of God, made such progress as to obtain, even among those already well instructed in grammar, a great reputation for his skill in interpreting sentences of holy writ: and, that it may be clear that this was done by the efficacy of divine grace, it must be observed that he gave only the hours of the night to this study; for never did he suffer his daily work to be interrupted for the sake of reading. The church being finished and consecrated,

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leads his army into the field, the laws of the country enforce military service, and the responsibility of the warfare does not lie on the consciences of individuals: they are compelled to submit to the royal command, and he is answerable for what is done. But in the eleventh century the right of private war was generally claimed; and these wars, if undertaken upon frivolous grounds, or as was more generally the case, from motives of self interest, if not of absolute rapacity, when sickness or reverses came, weighed heavily on the mind of the man who in

Herluin cut off his hair, and laying aside his secular dress, put on that of a monk; having shown himself through so many difficulties a valiant knight of Christ. Two of his people bent their heads with him under the yoke of the same order; and when, after he was consecrated priest, many other brethren had submitted to his authority, he became their abbot. He governed with much severity, after the manner of the ancient fathers. You might have seen him, after the offices of the church, carrying the seed upon his head, and in his hand the hoe or rake, marching at the head of his monks to the fields, where they spent the whole day in agricultural labours. Their daily food was bread and herbs, with water and salt. The noble mother of Herluin (of the family of the counts of Flanders) consecrated herself also here to the same service, for the love of God. Giving up to Him all that she possessed, she performed the

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his prosperity had thought little of any rule of life but that carved for him by his strong arm and good sword. Mortification of the flesh was held up by the saints of the church as the special road to the favour of heaven; the warrior, therefore, endeavoured to accomplish this in his own way; and he vowed to make a pilgrimage to some distant shrine, to which the journey would be fatiguing and perilous, or a campaign against unbelievers, which would make his death, if it occurred when fighting in such a cause, a martyrdom. Specific actions are always easier

meanest offices of a servant."—After a time Herluin quitted this place for Bec, where he constructed another church and buildings for the monks: "but the numerous quarrels which took place in the interior of the house, among the monks, afflicted him much."—Chance brought thither the famous Lanfranc, then travelling with a number of his scholars: he found the Abbot occupied in building an oven with his own hands; and struck with the character of the man, he at once professed himself a member of the community. This brought fame and friends, and the abbey of Bec became thenceforth rich, and magnificent in proportion to its riches. The perseverance and self-command of Herluin and his mother were heroic; but it was the heroism of individuals, not of the system, which threw away in useless hardships and needless labour, qualities of head and heart which were not given by God merely to build ovens, or hoe fields.

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than habitual self-control; and among these fierce warriors, unrefined by any tincture of letters;—whose service of "the ladies" was but a mere form of sensuality;—whose religion had been made to consist in gifts to a church or monastery, no one doubted but that the sins of a life might be wiped out by a harassing journey, or a large donation "for the love of Christ and his saints." *

It was on their return from one of these pilgrimages, that forty, or as some say, an hundred Norman knights disembarked at Salerno, a short time before the descent of a band of pirate Saracens on that coast. The prince of the country was preparing to buy the retreat of the pirates,

* "In the year 997, Foulques Nerra, Count of Anjou, violated the privileges of St. Martin of Tours, in order to surprise or arrest some enemy. 'He entered with a band of armed men,' says the chronicle of Anjou, 'into the very cloister, which was open to every one as a place of refuge. No one resisted him; but the canons immediately placed the crucifix and the bodies of the saints on the floor, and covered them with thorns, as well as the body of the very holy confessor, Martin. At the same time they shut the door of the church both by day and night, excluded all the citizens, and admitted only pilgrims. Very soon the Count repented of what he had done, and asking mercy, advanced towards the church with bare feet, followed by the principal persons

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when the Normans entreated him to give them horses and arms, and allow them to defend him. Their wish was granted, and their onset was so fierce that the Saracens were glad to retreat to their ships, and leave the town unharmed. The prince of Salerno would willingly have kept his brave defenders with him; but when he could by no means prevail on them to stay, or even to accept his presents, he sent them back; accompanied by an embassy carrying magnificent gifts to their country; and this military pilgrimage, which took place about A. D. 1002, was the first introduction of Norman adventurers into la Puglia, where they afterwards played so conspicuous a part. The rich gifts which the

of his suite. He first made satisfaction to the tomb of St. Martin, by presenting an offering; and then to the body of every saint, and to the crucifix; promising Renaud, bishop of Autun, never to undertake a similar enterprise any more.' At a later period this same Foulques, who had stabbed his wife Elizabeth, who had burnt the town of Saumur, and who had himself thrown the brand into the church of St. Florentius in that city, exclaiming to the saint,—'Allow me only to burn thy church here, and I will build thee one much more beautiful at Angers:'—this man, I say, is seen by turns repeating and expiating his crimes by a pilgrimage to Rome, and by three pilgrimages to the Holy Land."—Sismondi, Hist. des Français, tom. iv. p. 114.

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Prince of Salerno sent back with these chivalrous pilgrims, were, what he intended they should be, a lure to the young chevaliers of Normandy; and La Puglia became to the Normans of those days what India was to the English in the last century; a country where riches might be won by those who had no chance of anything but poverty in their own; the mode how, not being very scrupulously regarded.

It is foreign to our present purpose to record the struggles of Greeks, Lombards, and Saracens, on the shores of Calabria. The manners of the time still remain our chief object, and these may be illustrated by the cause of the second appearance of the Normans in Italy. One Osmond Drengot, in a hunting party, had killed a distinguished knight in the very presence of the duke; and dreading his resentment and that of the relations of the murdered man, he, with some companions, betook himself to La Puglia, "where his great valour caused him to be honourably received by the inhabitants of Beneventum," at that time* contending against the Greek emperor's forces. "Following the example of Drengot, many young and brave

* About A. D. 1016.

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knights, both Normans and Bretons, travelled also into Italy, and aiding the Lombards against the Saracens and Greeks, defeated the barbarians several times, and made themselves formidable to all who had felt their strength in arms. But the Lombards having driven off their enemies, and finding themselves now in security, began to disdain the Normans, and refused them their pay."* The Normans were not men who could be thus treated with impunity; and taking arms, and electing a chief, they constructed a fortress at Aversa, and formed a military colony, which was soon augmented by the influx of adventurers from Normandy; who, in consequence of the invitations of their countrymen, flocked thither in considerable numbers. Among these were the sons of Tancred de Hauteville, a Norman gentleman, whose numerous family made him glad to embrace this mode of providing for some of them. Among these sons of De Hauteville was the famous Robert Guiscard.

Again the aid of the Normans was sought by the contending parties; again, when the victory was won, the meed of their valour was refused

* Willelmi Gemeticens, Hist. Normann. lib. vii.

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them; and again the contemned warriors took a severe revenge. They soon made themselves masters of several strong places, and a considerable extent of territory; and in order to act with more effect, elected as their chief William, surnamed Braccio di Ferro, the eldest son of Tancred de Hauteville, as their Commander in chief, with the title of Count. To him, at his death about A. D. 1046, succeeded his next brother, Drago. The Normans were rapacious; and, when they had the power, treated the inhabitants with much insolence; this led to the assassination of many, and among the rest of Drogo, whose personal character by no means deserved this end, for "he was a man," says the chronicler, "deserving esteem, both for his Christian sentiments, and his chivalrous valour: but Guazo, Count of Naples, assassinated him while they were saying vigils in the church of Santo Lorenzo; before the altar, whilst he was praying to God and the saint." The family of De Hauteville was no less warlike than numerous, and another brother, Humfroi, succeeded the murdered Drogo. The Normans, as usual, revenged themselves; and the Apulians, suffering from their severities, applied to Pope Leo IX. for his assistance; which he was not unwilling

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to grant, as some of the estates of the church of Rome had been taken possession of by Count Humfroi's troops. The pope, being at that time with the emperor in Germany, prevailed on that prince to supply him with forces, and with these he marched against the Normans.* These last endeavoured to negotiate; but finding that nothing short of their total evacuation of Italy would satisfy the pontiff, they resolved to try the fortune of arms; and, in a bloody battle, defeated the German troops, and captured Leo himself shortly after.

The Normans showed much outward respect to the pope, but they compelled him to recall the excommunication which he had pronounced against them, and obtained from him a grant of all the conquests they had made or should hereafter make, to be held as a fief of the holy see, an arrangement which, for the time being, answered the purpose of both parties; for it gave a character of legality to the proceedings of the Normans, and gave the prelate a claim to the aid in arms of these warrior vassals. The history of the progress of the Norman arms in Calabria and Sicily, and the achievements of Robert

* A.D. 1053.

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Guiscard, who after a time succeeded his brothers in the command of the Norman colony, must be read in other histories. I have merely traced it thus far, in order to explain the manner in which the claim of the see of Rome to the control of Sicily and Naples first arose; a claim which caused rivers of blood to flow in after ages.

The passion for pilgrimages had become the greater, in proportion as the dangers to be surmounted stimulated the courage of these warlike votaries: at last the influx of Latins to the holy sepulchre was such as to give umbrage to the Caliph; and he first forbade their approach to the sepulchre, unless they consented to profane it, and finally, A. D. 1009, altogether demolished both the church and the tomb. By persons accustomed to look altogether to external things, as was the case with the Christians of the latin empire at this time, this event was regarded with grief and consternation; the more so as the enemy who had done the deed was too distant to be chastised: but the popular indignation soon found a channel by which to vent itself. It was reported by some that the Caliph had been bribed by the Jews to perform this act of profanation; and a Jew of Orleans was pointed

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out as the person who had carried the letter in a hollow stick. The fury was universal; "they were driven out of all the cities, some were slain by the sword, others drowned in the rivers, others put to death by all sorts of tortures. Several to escape torture put themselves to death; so that *after this just vengeance*"—such is the phrase of the contemporary chronicler—"an exceedingly small number remained in the whole Roman empire. A decree of the bishops interdicted all communication between Christians and Jews, save such as should receive baptism. Many complied with this condition, but merely from fear of death for they very soon returned to their former errors." The supposed messenger being seized, was beaten till he was induced to confess the imaginary crime, "upon which the king's officers dragged him out of the city, (of Orleans) and then, in the sight of all the people, committed him to the flames, in which he was consumed." Meantime those Jews who by hiding themselves had escaped from the popular fury, gradually came forth from their retreats; and began again to be seen in the cities in small numbers; and, the excitement having subsided, they were for a time suffered to live in peace; but this first ex-

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ample, as we shall afterwards see, engendered a frequent repetition of outrage against this unoffending people.

One only, among the feudal lords, afforded any protection to the sufferers; and from him they *bought* their safety. Rainard Comte de Sens had been accused of cruelty to his subjects, and contempt for priests and churches; and now, on account of the number of this persecuted nation which had found refuge in his states, he was called, half in derision, *the king of the Jews*. The bishops saw his conduct with displeasure; and Leutheric, the archbishop of Sens, went to the king, and offered to put the city into his hands if he would chastise the contumacious Rainard. The royal troops in consequence were introduced into the city, and took it; committing horrible excesses there, and finally they destroyed a large part of it by fire; "and" adds the chronicler "the former greatness of this proud city was exceeded now by its misery, which doubtless its crimes had deserved"*—The chronicler was a monk, which may account for the last phrase.

Turn to which side we will, the courtesies

* Radulphus Glaber, lib. vii. c. 6.

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and the virtues of chivalry, like the colours of the rainbow, still seem to fly before us; and we must dismiss from our thoughts the brilliant tales of romance writers ere we shall arrive at the true character of the men of the eleventh century. Let us make the real character of the times more apparent by a few anecdotes taken by chance from the pages of contemporary writers. I find the following in a single chapter of the history of the Normans—"Gilbert, comte d'Eu, son of count Godfrey, a politic and strong man, and guardian of the young William his lord, riding one morning, conversing with his companion, and thinking of no harm, was assassinated; as well as Foulques, son of Giroie. This crime was committed at the perfidious instigation of Raoul de Vacé, son of Robert the archbishop, by the cruel hands of Eudes le Gros, and the audacious Robert the son of Giroie. Afterwards, Turold the preceptor of the young duke was put to death by traitors unfaithful to their country. Osbern also, superintendent of the household of the young prince . . . being on a certain night in the chamber of the duke at Vaudreuil, and sleeping as well as the duke, in all security, was suddenly killed in his bed by William son of Roger de

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Mont-Gomeri. Roger himself was at this time exiled from Paris on account of his perfidy; and his five sons, Hugh, Robert, Roger, William and Gilbert remained in Normandy, abandoning themselves to all manner of crimes. But William was not long before he received from God the reward of his crimes; for Barno de Glote provost of Osbern, wishing to revenge the unjust death of his lord, assembled on a certain night a number of strong champions, and going to the house where William and his accomplices were sleeping, massacred them all as they deserved."* A certain "William Talvas had married Hildeburga the daughter of Arnoul, a man of very noble birth, by whom he had two children. But as Hildeburga was of strict principles, and loved God fervently, she would not share in the evil deeds of her husband, in consequence of which he took a great aversion to her. At last one day as she was going to church, he caused her to be waylaid by two of his parasites, and strangled. He then engaged himself to the daughter of Raoul, vicomte de Beaumont; and invited to his nuptials several neighbouring lords, among the rest

* Willelmi Gemelicens. Hist. Normann. lib. vii. c. 2.

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William Giroie, a man of great valour. The brother of this last, Raoul, surnamed the clerk, because he was much versed in the study of letters . . . foreseeing from some prognostic that harm would come of this, entreated his brother not to go to the scandalous marriage of this ferocious bigamist: but William, disdaining the counsel of his brother, went unarmed to Alençon with twelve knights. Whilst he was there, fearing no harm, but rather according to the custom was enjoying himself at his friend's marriage, Talvas, without the least offence on his part, had him seized like a traitor, and ordered his vassals to keep him in strict confinement. Then he going out with his guests on a hunting party, his satellites who had received his orders, brought out William, and in the midst of the tears and lamentations of all who saw it, put out his eyes, and mutilated him shamefully, by cutting off the tip of his nose and his ears. On hearing this many were afflicted, and did their best to punish such a crime . . . Robert and Raoul, the brothers of William, noble chevaliers, with their brothers and relations, set about vigorously to revenge the horrible insult which their brother had received. They devastated, therefore, with fire

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and sword all the lands of Talvas up to the very gates of his castles, inviting him to come forth and fight them. But he, being a timid man, who had little skill in the exercises of chivalry, did not dare to fight them in the open country; and thus the family of Giroie continued to insult him and plunder his lands." Thus the guilty lord escaped, and his innocent serfs and vassals suffered the punishment of his crimes: and this was an almost necessary consequence of the feudal system: for when a great lord could retire to his fortified castle and defend himself, the only mode of punishing him was by destroying his lands and fortresses, till he was reduced to submission; so that no great delinquent could be brought to justice unless by the employing an army to subdue him; in doing which, the country was so wasted, that it was long in recovering from the effects of such an expedition.

The natural consequence of this was famine, if the seasons proved at all unfavourable; and this was the case A. D. 1030, when, according to a contemporary chronicler "one would have said that the elements had declared war, and

* Willelmi Gem. H. Norm. lib. vii. c. 10.

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obeyed the divine mandate to chastise the insolence of man: the earth was so inundated by continual rains that for three years not a furrow could be traced fit for sowing; and at the time of harvest weeds covered the fields, and the bushel of grain in the best cultivated lands, yielded only one sixth of its usual produce. This calamity first began in the east, and after having desolated Greece, passed into Italy, spread over Gaul, and even the people of England were afflicted by it. The great, the people of middle rank, and the poor, all suffered equally from hunger, and were pale and emaciated; for the violence of the great had at length given way to the universal scarcity . . . the price of a bushel of grain was sixty sous, sometimes even the sixth part of a bushel cost fifteen sous; and after having consumed the beasts and the birds, as hunger was not the less severely felt, it was necessary in order to appease it, to consume dead bodies, or any other nourishment equally horrible. To escape dying of hunger, the people rooted up the trees in the forest, and the grass from the streams; but in vain . . . Men devoured the flesh of men: the traveller attacked on his road, sank under the blows of his assailants; his limbs were torn asunder, grilled

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on the fire, and devoured. Others flying from their country in the hope of finding more plenty elsewhere, received hospitality on the road, and their hosts cut their throats in the night in order to eat their flesh. Others offered an egg or an apple to children, in order to draw them into some lonely spot, where they sacrificed them to their hunger. In many places the corpses were torn from the ground in order to make a horrible repast. At last this mania increased to such an extent that beasts were less sought than men; and it seemed to be the established usage to eat human flesh. One wretched man in Tournus dared to carry it cooked into the public market for sale. He was arrested, and did not deny his crime. He was strangled and burnt. Another went and dug up in the night the flesh which had been buried, and ate it: he was also burned."

"There is, three miles from Macon, in the forest of Chatenay, an isolated church dedicated to St. John. A wicked wretch had constructed not far from it a hut, where he murdered the travellers who sought shelter with him; and fed on their bodies. A man came there one day with his wife, and asked hospitality; but when

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he had rested a short time, on looking about him, he saw in a corner the heads of men, women, and children. He was alarmed, and attempted to leave the place: his host opposed him, but finally he escaped with his wife and fled with all haste to the city. . . . Men were sent to take this monster in his den; where they found forty-eight human heads, belonging to the bodies he had devoured. He was carried to the town, hung on a beam in a cellar, and afterwards burned. We ourselves were present at the execution." * We cannot have a better comment than these pages afford on the effects of a ceremonial religion, altered till it fitted the capacities of barbarians; and a military polity where the sword was the law.

Still the misery of the time brought out what little remained of Christian feeling in the system: the ecclesiastical treasuries were opened, and the ornaments of the churches stripped off, in order to minister to the wants of the poor: and when at last a better season and abundant harvest came, all seem to have been touched with a consciousness that the calamity had

* Radulph. Glaber. lib. iv. cap. 4, &c.

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not been uncaused or undeserved; and considerable endeavours were made to remedy the evils which, according to the phraseology of the times, had brought the wrath of God upon all. Councils were everywhere called "for the re-establishment of peace, and the maintenance of the faith; and great and small waited for their decision as if it had been the voice of God himself: for the remembrance of their misfortunes, and the fear lest they should not be able to profit by the abundance which the earth now promised, had taken possession of all minds." As was the fashion of the time, pious offerings formed a large part of the measures resolved on; but this was not all—"One of the most important points was the preservation of an inviolable peace. In order to this, it was decreed that every individual of either class, whatever had been his previous conduct, should now go abroad, without arms, in perfect security. He who had seized on the property of others should be reached by the authority of the laws, and either be despoiled of his ill-gotten wealth, or suffer rigorous corporal punishment. The right of sanctuary should be respected, excepting in the case of any one who should have violated the peace: and it was furthermore provided that

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any one travelling in company with a clerk or monk, should be safe from all violence." *

Nothing can better mark what had been the previous state of things than these attempted provisions for its remedy: but a resolution taken in a moment of enthusiasm is generally of but little avail, unless there be the means of enforcing it afterwards by the power of the law; and no sooner had a plentiful harvest removed the danger from their doors, than, as was to be expected, the great returned to their former habits, and with them the other classes. Both priests and people were labouring under a great mistake in this case, already often noticed in these pages:—that of supposing that submission to authority would stand in the place of motives founded on great principles. The decrees of the council, says the chronicler, were listened to as if God himself had spoken; but what could this avail towards counteracting the habits of a life, during which the feudal lord had been sedulously taught that every act of violence could be atoned for by a pilgrimage or an offering? The chronicler, struck with what he saw, continues "Alas, the human race soon forgot

* Radulph. Glaber. lib. iv. cap. 4, &c.

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the benefits of the Lord, and violated many of the engagements they had voluntarily taken towards God,* and the great of both orders were the first to abandon themselves to avarice, as before; and sometimes with a yet greater license recommenced their rapine. Men of the middle class followed their example, and rushed into the most shameful excesses . . . and for a completion of all this evil, notwithstanding the severe and repeated remonstrances of a few, the prediction of the prophet was fulfilled, and it was as with the people, so with the priest: for those who were at the head of the church as at the head of affairs, were yet in their nonage . . . The pope of the universal church himself,† nephew of the two popes Benedict and John, his predecessors, was scarcely ten years old when he was elected by the Romans; thanks to the liberal use made of his "treasures . . . and as for the other prelates of the church we have

* It does not appear, however, that the preaching of the "Peace of God" extended much beyond Gaul and Italy.

† Benedict IX. consecrated pope A.D. 1033. He was driven several times from the pontifical chair, but returned to it as often. He finished by abdicating altogether A.D. 1048.

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already said that they owed their elevation more to their riches than their merit." But there was an easier mode of making peace with heaven according to the belief of the time, and this was largely adopted:—"At this time an innumerable number came from the extremities of the world to visit the holy sepulchre of the Saviour at Jerusalem . . . At first it was the lower class of people, then the middle, then the greatest kings, counts, marquesses, prelates; and finally, what had never before been seen, many women, as well noble as poor, undertook this pilgrimage; and many showed an anxious desire to die there rather than return to their own country."* Among those who followed this universal fashion was Robert, duke of Normandy, who probably hoped thus to wipe out the guilt of the deed by which he had attained to the duchy.† He died on his way back, leaving only the one illegitimate son, whose talents and courage when he grew to man's estate, made him afterwards so remarkable as William I. of England.

* Rudulphus Glaber. lib. iv. c. 4, 5.

† He was supposed to have poisoned his elder brother at a feast to which he invited him. All who had been guests died immediately after.

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Christianity had at last been brought down again to the level of polytheism; it was therefore to be expected that long and painful pilgrimages and costly offerings would again be resorted to, in order to quiet the girdings of an uneasy conscience. Accordingly the rage for building monasteries was not less than that for pilgrimages to the Holy Land. We find chapter after chapter of the chronicles of the day filled with the endowments of numberless establishments of this kind; and the monk who a few pages before has recorded assassinations and crimes of all kinds committed by the same men, records now with great satisfaction how many convents they founded, and filled with monks "who should pray to God for them." Thus Roger de Mont-Gomeri, the same who is commemorated elsewhere as having been exiled from Paris for "his perfidy," and whose sons were engaged in a life of "*brigandage*," not choosing to appear inferior in anything to his ancestors, constructed two noble churches in honour of St. Martin, one in the suburbs of the town of Sées, and the other in the village of Tourny; and assembled a large flock of monks for the service of God. He founded likewise a third church at Almenesche

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for nuns;* and thus by bestowing a small portion of the wealth acquired by extortion and violence on the maintenance of persons *who should pray for him*, the traitor and the murderer gained the reputation of piety, and weakened that voice within which was given for our guidance. It is an ill thing for the poor and the unprotected, when wealth and power can thus *purchase* a fancied immunity from the consequences of crime. The feudal lord, ensconced in his fortified castle, with his armed retainers about him, was already above the law of the land; but there still remained a law which no bands of armed vassals could defend him from, and before which he trembled: to that law the wretched might appeal, and perhaps not always unavailingly, had it been suffered to have its free course; but when the ministers of a corrupt faith fenced the soul with a band of retainers no less powerful, according to their own account, with the potentates of heaven than were the men at arms who feasted in the castle hall, where earthly potentates were to be resisted, then indeed the last hope was gone, and "the earth was filled with violence."

* Willelmi Gemeticens. Hist. Normann. lib. vii. c. 22.

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How little the progress of such a version of Christianity did for real civilisation, may be seen by what took place in England at the beginning of this century, scarcely fifty years after all the monkish historians had raised a pæan for the triumph of ecclesiastical power in the person of Dunstan; and where monasteries innumerable had been founded, in which the rigid Benedictine rule, as revived at Clugni and Fleury, had been enforced; and not only enforced in those newly constructed or rebuilt, but also on those hitherto devoted to the less strict secular priests, who had been driven out to make way for monks. On one fixed day by royal order, and for no cause that the chroniclers can assign, the unsuspecting and peaceable Danish colonists were brutally massacred;* the ties of friendship and of marriage were alike disregarded; the wife was torn from her husband, or was given up by him; and it was in a land where the cause of

* Ethelred, the perpetrator of this savage slaughter, had married the daughter of Richard II. of Normandy. His sons were therefore nephews to Robert, the reigning duke; and William, his successor, was their cousin-german. Ethelred died in the midst of the contest between the Danes and English, and his two sons, Edward and Alfred, fled to their uncle.

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monasticism was triumphant, and where therefore, if that were the highest point of virtue, Christianity ought to have been found in perfection, that a king was found to devise, ministers to order, and a people to execute a decree as savage as anything that heathenism had ever perpetrated.

The crime quickly brought its own chastisement, and it was long and severe. The king of Denmark took up the cause of his countrymen, and an armament stronger than any which had hitherto left the shores of the Baltic, after ravaging the country, drove the heir of the crown to seek refuge in Normandy with his uncle; and Canute or Knut the Dane mounted the throne of England. Nor was this all: it was during this forced sojourn in Normandy that Edward became so much attached to the habits of that country as to give umbrage to his English subjects, and the intimate intercourse which now took place probably gave the first notion of the possibility of annexing the English crown to the dukedom: for Edward, either from dislike to his English wife, or from having adopted the asceticism of the cloister, left no heir to the throne; and at his death the realm of England was contended for rather by those who thought

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they had strength to win and to hold it, than by any who could plead a right to inherit.

William of Normandy, however, made his claim to the throne upon plausible grounds, at a time when the law of hereditary succession was far from being well established. The favour of the deceased monarch, and the oath of Harold, which he broke when he sought the crown, no doubt influenced many; and when the death of the king elect left the nation again without a sovereign, the chiefs of the nation met in Witenagemot, chose William by acclamation, not apparently anticipating that they were to be treated as a conquered nation by the monarch whom they had elected.

At the time that William I. landed in England the Normans were without doubt the most accomplished warriors of their time: they brought new weapons and new tactics to bear on the English array; and the same thing happened (as occurred when the Romans brought their lighter and more manageable legions against the Macedonian phalanx: the more easily manœuvred troops won the day: but it was not military skill alone which gave the Normans the advantage. Let us hear what were the habits of the people at this time, and we shall probably find

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in them a better reason why the English were vanquished at Hastings, and afterwards in all the separate contests which were undertaken, than is afforded even by the superior tactics of the invaders. William of Malmsbury, who might have heard from his father the tale of the first landing of Duke William, thus describes the habits of his countrymen at that time. "The desire after literature and religion had decayed for several years before the arrival of the Normans. The clergy, contented with a very slight degree of learning, could scarcely stammer out the words of the sacraments; and a person who understood grammar was an object of wonder and astonishment. . . . The nobles were given up to luxury and wantonness . . . *the commonalty, left unprotected, became a prey to the most powerful, who amassed fortunes by either seizing on their property, or by selling their persons into foreign parts.* . . . There was, moreover, one custom repugnant to nature which they adopted, namely, to sell their female servants when pregnant by them . . . either to public prostitution or foreign slavery. Drinking in parties was an universal practice, in which occupation they passed entire nights as well as days, living at the same time in mean and

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wretched habitations, unlike the Normans, who in noble and splendid mansions lived with frugality. The vices attendant on drunkenness followed; hence it was, that, engaging William more with rashness and precipitate fury than military skill, they devoted themselves and their country to slavery." He concludes his account with a description of their dress, which tells of much barbarism—"Their arms were laden with golden bracelets, their skin adorned with punctured designs;" adding, "They were accustomed to eat till they became surfeited, and to drink till they were sick."

This picture is that of a people no less corrupt than barbarous; and the passage I have marked in Italics will sufficiently explain why no general or national opposition was offered to the oppression of the Normans. The lower classes probably were not sorry to see those under whom they had suffered, suffering in their turn. What mattered it to the victim of tyranny whether his master was a foreigner or a native? He might argue that he could not be in a worse situation; he might hope for a certain degree of amelioration: at any rate the *regime* under which he had lived was not one in the defence of which he would be very ready to risk his life.

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We have seen enough of the character of the Norman lords to judge that their rule would not be mild;* yet to the gross and barbarous English they brought something of civilisation, somewhat more of learning, some beginnings of greater refinement of taste; "for the Normans," continues the chronicler above quoted, "were at that time, and are even now, proudly apparelled, delicate in their food, but not excessive . . They revived by their arrival the observances of religion, which were everywhere grown lifeless in England. You might now see churches rise in every village, and monasteries built in the towns and cities, constructed in a style unknown before." Nor was this the only change: the Norman nobles who were now to be rewarded for the blood and toil spent in establishing William on the throne, received whole districts as fiefs; and their fortified castles soon covered the land, and served as garrisons to keep the disaffected natives in awe. England, which, while its monarchs were at the head of its scho-

* William himself, on one occasion, when some persons had insulted him by holding up skins in derision of his maternal grandfather's trade, ordered them to be seized, to the number of thirty-two, and had *their hands and feet instantly cut off*. This happened in France.

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lastic institutions, had been the nurse of learning, had for some time sunk back into barbarism under the narrow *regime* of the monks of Fleury: the influx of Norman gentry, and the intercourse with foreign nations which this occasioned, roused it once more from its lethargy, never to sink again; and looking, as we may now do, at the consequences of this event, we can hardly avoid tracing in it that sure adaptation of means apparently the most untoward to the promotion of one great end, which may encourage us to hope, even when circumstances look the darkest. It is only by reviewing long periods, when the mists of passion and prejudice have cleared away, that we can obtain a clear view of the moral government of the universe; which, while allowing every evil action to bring its evil consequence, fails not to evolve from this complication of ignorance and perverseness a sure though slow progress towards a higher destiny. For its slowness we may thank our own folly; for when did the οἱ πολλοι ever listen willingly to the great minds which, stepping out of the narrow boundaries appointed them by ancient custom, venture to tell them they are wrong, and point to a better course? For its sureness,—and all experience shows us—that it

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is sure,—we may thank a higher government than that of man.

It was not to be expected that the English would submit quietly to the insolence and exactions of the Norman lords, who, when William returned to Normandy, oppressed the country without restraint. Extensive insurrections followed, and of so formidable a nature that the king was obliged to return to England to superintend the requisite military operations; and the rebellion was crushed with characteristic cruelty. The whole country from York to Durham was laid waste with true Northman ferocity: one hundred thousand persons are said to have perished on this occasion; unburied corpses were preyed upon by wild animals, or decayed uncared for,* and uncultivated fields and ruined villages, marked the course of the pirate's descendant over a tract which had been only driven to rebellion against the king they had elected by the intolerable oppression of the officers whom he had appointed.

The tranquillity which was thus restored was that of despair and desolation: but the obstinacy

* Hoveden.

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of the struggle had taught the Norman a lesson which he had sense enough to profit by. The laws of the Anglo-Saxons were preserved with but few alterations; and those were beneficial ones. The fiefs, indeed, which were conferred on the Norman followers were subjected to the usual conditions of feudal tenure; but, with this exception, the administration of the country was conducted on the Saxon plan though by different persons. The Witenagenot still survives in our parliament; the Sheriff and other inferior civil officers are all of Anglo-Saxon origin, and not a little of our common law may be traced back to the time of Alfred. Some wise and merciful new enactments were made; such as, that no man should be sold out of the country; a species of oppression which, as has been noticed, was practised to a large extent by the Anglo-Saxon lords; and a farther provision was made for the gradual freeing of the population, by enacting that a serf should be held free after residing a year, unclaimed by his lord, in any city or castle. The bishoprics and abbeys were given to Normans, but under William I. they were men of character and learning: Lanfranc especially, who was made archbishop of Canterbury, was famed as one of the most accomplished scholars

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then to be found in Europe. The relations with Rome were placed on a footing of independence: no papal bull was valid in England without the king's sanction, and even Gregory VII. found himself obliged to take quietly William's refusal of fealty.

Christianity, such as it was at this time, continued to make progress among the rude barbarians who had fixed themselves on the frontiers of Europe; and with it a certain degree of civilisation: Denmark and Norway on receiving a milder faith, abandoned their fierce piracy; and we hear no more, after this century, of the sea kings who had been the terror of Europe. Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, and Hungary had joined the Latin Church; Russia had allied itself to the Greek empire by marriage, A.D. 988, and had embraced its faith: and in this century gave a queen to France, who became the mother of Philippe I. This prince succeeded his father, A.D. 1060, when only five years old, and the long minority completed the disorders of the kingdom.

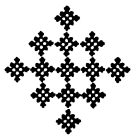
The lawless violence of the great lords at last provoked the people into combinations to defend themselves, and in this century the citizens of various towns entered into a compact

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with each other for mutual defence, which in many cases was confirmed by royal charter: for the sovereign was by no means dipleased to see some limit put to the encroachments of the nobles, which had left the regal dignity a mere shadow. The very privileges claimed by these communes sufficiently show the unreasonable oppression to which they had been subject. That of Chaumont claims exemption from unjust capture, forced loans and unreasonable exactions by any lord whatever: that of Soissons specifies that the citizens may take any woman they please as a wife, after having asked permission of their lord, and if without his consent any one should take a wife from another lordship, he should not pay a fine of above five sous. In some cities the clergy and knights resident there joined in the compact. Thus the foundation was laid in a large part of the continent of Europe for those municipal privileges which at a later period curbed the power of the nobles, and led to the growth of that middle class which has of late been struggling for supremacy, not always wisely: for the complete downfal of the nobility, where it has been effected, has been followed by unmitigated despotism. This indeed might have been expected; for a

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powerful aristocracy, having a class interest, will generally unite and act as a compact body; while on the other hand, the various interests of the commons tend rather to division than combination. In Germany and Flanders the towns had risen to opulence earlier, and, in Flanders especially, the commerce carried on in the great cities was already considerable.



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CHAPTER X.

State of the Church during the Eleventh Century.

THE detail of ecclesiastical abuses, corrupt doctrine, and general immorality which disgraced the christian church during the tenth century was not a little melancholy; and the eleventh opened under no better auspices. Rome had again fallen into the power of the counts of Tusculum, and the papacy was either conferred on a member of that family, or sold to the highest bidder. Two brothers of Alberic, count of Tusculum,* had successively been elevated to the papal chair; and at the death of the last, the count's son, a child of ten years old, was enthroned to receive the homage of the christian world! Even in that age of profligacy, the youthful pope made himself remarkable for his excesses: revolts followed, other popes were

* Benedict VIII. and John XIX.

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elected, and for a time no less than three were supported by different parties.

The scandal thus occasioned at length moved the emperor Henry III. to take measures for its removal. He assembled a council at Sutri A. D. 1046, at which all three popes were deposed, and the bishop of Bamberg chosen in their room, by the name of Clement II. Another council was then assembled at Rome by the new pope, in which strong measures were taken against the sale of benefices, which was stigmatized by the name of *simony:* and in order to prevent the see of Rome from being the object of so shameful a traffic in future, an oath was required from the Romans that they would not again proceed to the election of a pope without the concurrence of the emperor.

The influence exercised by Henry over the choice of the popes was creditable to him: four successive pontiffs were his nominees, and all were men of good character. Leo IX. who was raised to that dignity A. D. 1049, was his own relation; but was so anxious not to avail himself unfairly of that circumstance, that he would not accept the office till he had visited Rome in person, and received the suffrage of the clergy and people according to ancient usage. Being

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therefore clear of all imputation of irregularity in his own election, Leo could proceed with decency to the purification of the ecclesiastical body at large, a measure which the daily scandals arising from the barefaced traffic in benefices rendered most desirable. At a council held at Reims where the pope presided in person, an oath was required from the bishops who attended it, that they had not been guilty of simoniacal practices; many in consequence absented themselves, and of those present* six were unable to take the oath: four were deposed in consequence; and the practice, though not wholly abolished, was checked by this proper severity.

When wealth could no longer purchase preferment, ability might be expected to make its way; and accordingly we find the ecclesiastics of this period beginning to assume a different tone: the monarchical power had been weakened in most countries; and an ambitious mind might easily dream that a bold struggle would establish an ecclesiastical empire over all: the occasion was favourable, and the man was not

* There were not more than twenty-five prelates; or as some say only twenty.

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wanting to it. Hildebrand, a native of Siena, and as it is said, of low birth; who had entered the monastery of Clugni to learn the strictest Benedictine rule, had all the stern courage and activity required in the leader of such a movement; and he was among the foremost in promoting measures of ecclesiastical reform. It was at his instance that Leo IX. had refused the investiture of the see of Rome from the emperor, and sought it from the clergy and people; and he accompanied the pilgrim pope on his journey: we are therefore justified in concluding that the farther measures of church discipline which were afterwards carried on with unsparing severity, were suggested by him, even before his elevation to the papacy gave him the right to interfere.

Circumstances favoured his views, if indeed those views were so early formed, for Henry III. whose character would probably have rendered any contest with him unavailing, died in the very prime of life A. D. 1050, leaving only a son of five years old to succeed him in the empire under the regency of his mother. The effects of the change, however, were not felt immediately: and Nicholas II. who was chosen A. D. 1059, was the nominee of the imperial

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court, as his immediate predecessors had been. The pontificate of this pope was rendered remarkable by the first steps towards independence. The choice of a proper person to occupy the see of Rome was thenceforward to be confided to the cardinals who were formed into an electoral college; and they only were to have the right of presenting the pope elect to the people for the sanction of their suffrage, thus precluding all direct interference of the secular power. The next measure was the complete prohibition of marriage to the clergy, which though it had often been attempted, had never been enforced, and at this time was almost wholly neglected by the secular priests. The married clergy were now declaimed against as heretics and innovators; stigmatized as *Nicolaitans*, and held up to popular contempt. This was but a natural consequence of the grossness of the times; for when man suffers his intellect to slumber till he descends to the level of the brutes, the connection between the sexes loses all its refinement. The husband and wife are no longer denizens of heaven, journeying together in a far country, and aiding each other by counsel and encouragement to travel hopefully towards their distant home: they are

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simply the male and female animal, coupled by brute instinct; and though the law may enforce the permanence of the arrangement, it gives none of the holy influences which shed their sanctifying grace over a christian union of hearts. In an age of ignorance, brutal violence, and licentiousness, marriage had lost its purity, and consequently its respect; and we need not seek in the required celibacy of the clergy a deep laid scheme for maintaining an ecclesiastical militia; a separate caste, with interests and views of its own, although its effect was, to produce such a body. The general opinion certainly supported the measures of the heads of the church, and in many instances the people refused to receive the sacraments from the hands of a married priest.

We may now consider the *system* of the Roman church as established: its *development* depended on circumstances, and these were somewhat unusual: for the death of Henry I. of France A. D. 1060, placed his son Philip upon the throne at the early age of seven years, and thus the two mightiest crowns of Europe were worn by children in their nonage, under the guidance of their respective mothers. A regency is rarely a strong government; and at

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that time especially, when strength of arm was far more respected than strength of head, the sway of a woman was not likely to be willingly submitted to by turbulent nobles, accustomed to revolt upon the slightest occasion. Thus the danger of slighting imperial or regal authority was greatly lessened.

Alexander II. died A. D. 1073, and the populace assembled at the funeral ceremony of the deceased pope tumultuously proclaimed Hildebrand as his successor. The mode of election was irregular, and when he entered on the functions of the papacy without having received the investiture from the emperor, he afforded room for disputing the legality of his title, as was the case when, at a later period, the disputes between him and Henry IV. were pushed to extremity. But at the present moment all seemed to favour the designs of the zealous and ambitious ecclesiastic; or perhaps we should say with more truth, to foster their growth. The emperor at this time only twenty two years of age, was inexperienced and vicious; Philip of France, about two years younger, was not less so; and the energetic *man* might easily think himself more than a match for these mere *boys*, whose intellects were likely to suffer from their early excesses. We are generally apt in speak-

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ing of the actors in great events to give them credit for deeper laid schemes than they had ever really formed. The greatest generals and the wisest politicians have usually gained their fame by promptly seizing, and making their advantage of the occasion, perhaps as little expected by them as by others, rather than by attempting to lead the course of events. Human nature is just in its estimate of its own powers, and the keenest intellects see the soonest the limits within which they act: and this probably to a considerable extent was the case with Hildebrand, whom in future we must speak of as Gregory VII. When the emperor Henry III. disgusted with the corrupt practices at Rome bestirred himself to put a stop to the gross abuses which had brought the whole ecclesiastical body into disrepute, this zealous and able man entered warmly into the views of the imperial court, and seconded them with all his power; nor have we any proof that he ever entertained any other plan during the life of Henry III. than that of restoring church discipline with the aid of the civil power: but the circumstances already noticed might have tempted even a less ambitious man to go farther than he had at first intended.

The feudal system offered a model on which

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a polity which should place the supreme Pontiff at the head of Christendom might be constituted. Every grade in that system, up to the monarch, had a superior to whom fealty and service was due, and whose will, within not very well-defined limits, was law: but the monarchs themselves having no suzerain to whom they were amenable, and no general law acknowledged by all, wrongs could only be righted by the sword, and wars ensued unavoidably. If, however, these monarchs could be persuaded to submit themselves to a single suzerain, a man of peace, whose interests were not of this world; the matters in dispute might be laid before him for an equitable arrangement, and if his decision was not promptly acquiesced in, he could call on the other vassals to enforce it; thus rendering resistance hopeless, crushing the very germ of future wars, and carrying into practice the admonition of the Apostle and the practice of the early church, by making the bishop the composer of all differences between Christians: and could a Divinity have wielded such a power as this, it might have been a blessing: but the engine was too mighty an one for mortal hands to guide. The splendour of the scheme nevertheless was such as might blind an ardent mind

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to its necessary defects, and Gregory probably had not considered that the abuses of such a power might, and probably would be as enormous as the power itself. Even the most conscientious priest carries with him into his holy office the ordinary passions of his species; and not even the most zealous of the Apostles either boasted of, or hoped for, any immunity from these human impulses. Power and wealth looming in the distance will create in most minds a longing to obtain them; and he who forgets in some brilliant ideal scheme, the small, low motives which, like serpents will creep around his feet as well as those of others, even while his eyes are dazzled by the glorious end he is contemplating, will find when it is too late that they have poisoned his very life-blood, and palsied his arm when the time comes for using it. If the monk Hildebrand had indeed thought conscientiously of purifying the church, the pope Gregory at any rate very soon listened to the voice of ambition; and was not very scrupulous in the means he adopted for realizing a dream whose splendour had captivated his imagination. But he had entered on his undertaking without calculating the cost. Henry, though so far alarmed by the distracted state of his dominions as to

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submit to the well known disgraceful penance inflicted by the haughty Pontiff, soon found that he had rather injured than improved his situation by this degradation; and the remembrance of it rankled in his breast. Fresh dissensions having arisen, Gregory excommunicated the Emperor, and set his subjects free from their allegiance. The princes of the empire already on bad terms with Henry, elected Rodolph, Duke of Suabia in his room, and for a short time Gregory's triumph seemed complete: for Rodolph was willing to receive the crown as his gift: but Henry, driven now to extremity, showed considerable energy and skill. He defeated his rival in three battles, and then calling a synod of bishops, referred to them the question whether the pope had not been guilty of rebellion, and thereby forfeited his dignity. After a lengthened discussion, both Germans and Italians determined in the affirmative; and thereupon proceeded to the election of the archbishop of Ravenna to the see of Rome, who took the title of Clement III. In a fourth battle Rodolph was slain, and Henry led his victorious army to Rome; besieged and took the city, and having caused the new pope to be consecrated with the usual forms,

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received the imperial crown from his hands, and the oath of allegiance from the Romans. Gregory meantime had shut himself up in the strong castle of St. Angelo, and summoned his Norman vassal, Robert Guiscard, to his aid. That veteran commander was never averse from war: the imperial army having been partly withdrawn from Rome, he was enabled to obtain possession of the city, which his troops in part plundered; and Gregory, not daring to remain there, withdrew under their escort to Salerno, where he died the year following, A.D. 1085: and thus, in exile and disappointment, ended the mighty plans of Gregory VII.

A long schism in the church followed, for the adherents who had accompanied Gregory to Salerno, chose another pope in his stead, by the title of Victor III: and he having gained over a part of the Romans to his side, the two popes both exercised their functions for some time in different parts of the city, and were obeyed by their respective parties. At the death of Victor a council was called at Terracina by the adherents of the Countess Matilda;* where,

* This princess's mother was the sister of the emperor Henry III. and family discord had led her to entertain a rooted hatred against her cousin. She threw the

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though only three cardinals were present, Urban II. was chosen to succeed him: a name rendered famous by the consequences of the council called by him at Placentia first, and reassembled at Clermont, A. D. 1095, when the ambassadors of the Greek emperor appeared as petitioners to the Latin Christians for aid against the Musselmans, by whom the Eastern empire was then hard pressed. The council had been convened for a very different purpose, in order to take cognisance of the disgraceful conduct of both Henry of Germany and Philip of France; and notwithstanding the extraordinary enthusiasm kindled among the persons there assembled, Urban himself had but a small share in exciting it. But the results of this enthusiasm belong to a different age.

Among the many evils which had resulted from the ravages of the piratical hordes which had desolated the greater part of Europe during the ninth century, may be reckoned the destruction of the libraries of the churches; which, in that age when the producing a single copy of

whole weight of her power, which her large possessions in Italy rendered great, on the side of Gregory, and finally made over her estates to the holy see.

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a book was a work of time and labour,—could not be replaced during many generations; and even then, the very increase of ignorance which the loss of these libraries had engendered, served to prevent their reproduction: for the value of the ancient literature of Greece and Rome was not known; and copyists devoted their labour to the works of Jerome and Augustine, or the legends of the saints, rather than to those of Plato or Cicero. So rare were MSS. become that a certain Countess of Anjou is reported to have given two hundred sheep, a load of wheat, a load of rye, and a load of millet, besides several skins of costly fur, for a copy of the Homilies of Haymon of Halberstadt.* It was

* V. Hist. Lit. de la France, tom. vii. p. 3.

A slight sketch of the history of one monastery may serve to show that the above assertions are well grounded. I will take that of St. Riquier as a specimen, for its library appears to have been a matter of especial pride to the chronicler.

It was founded in the sixth century among the many that had their origin in the preaching of S. Columban. Having subsequently fallen into a dilapidated state, it was re-edified by Angelbert, the son-in-law of Charlemagne, who finally renouncing the world, became its abbot, and enriched it with relics from all parts of the world, and what was then thought a magnificent library; both of which we have the list of; that of the relics by

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not possible for any but the most princely fortunes to obtain books at such a cost: we cannot

his own hand. It affords an amusing specimen of well-meaning credulity. We find among them not merely a portion of the stone on which the Saviour sate when he fed the 5000, but a portion of one of the loaves—a part of "*the candle* which was burnt at the Nativity," and of "the wood of the three tabernacles" which were *not* constructed at the Transfiguration. We may form from this some notion of the biblical knowledge of the noble abbot. The remains of about 200 martyrs, confessors, and virgins close the list, many of which he acknowledges to be uncertain, but which he has "named according to probability." The books consist of—

Libri Canonici: Bibliotheca integra ubi continentur, lib. lxxii. in uno volumine. Item Bibliotheca dispersa in voluminibus xiv.

De lib. S. Hieronymi super Isaiam, &c. in uno volumine.
Evangelium in Græco et Latino scriptum.
—— S. Augustini, &c. iv.
—— S. Gregorii Expositio in Ezek. vol. iii. Moralia, vol. v. Homilia xl. vol. ii.
Pastorale, Dialogus, Registrum ordo Ecclesiasticus, &c.
———— Isidori, &c. in iii. voluminibus.
———— Originis, &c. in ii. voluminibus.
———— Hilarii autem de fide S. Trinitati: quæstiones Hilarii Cypriani.
Alcimi Aniti; Hieronymi, Augustini, super Pentateucham in 1 vol.
—— Joh. Chrysostomi, &c. in 1 vol.
Cassiodori; super totum Psalterium.
Bedæ de templo Salamonis, &c.

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therefore wonder at the gross ignorance which prevailed.

Diversorum autem: Julii de auctoritate divine legis, Eugipsi excerptum &c. S. Aug. Paschasii De S. Scto. Primasii in Apoc. Timothei lib. iv.—Peregrini cont. hæret. Epist. Theophili ad Episc. totius Ægypti: Expositio Arnobii. Greg. Naz. Homil. Augustini de lætitia et gratia. Athanasii in Levitico.

De Canonibus: Canones, Concilia, &c. Homiliarius SS. Patrum anni circuli Hieron. Aug. Greg. Orig. Leon. Joh. Chrys. Fulgent. Bedæ, &c. in iv. vol. Hom. S. Agnetis. Boëtii de cons. philos. Greg. Episc. Turon. de generat. Adæ et de gestis Francorum Expos. Philippi super Job. glossæ SS. Patrum super Psalmos. Cassiani de Incarn. Dni. Expos. Justi in Cant. Canticor. Eucherii Episc. de defectu solis et lunæ: vitæ vel passiones SS. Apostolor. Mart. Confess. Virginum in vol. xviii. Expos. Juliani Pomerii, &c. &c. Omnes codices lib. claustralium de divinitati sunt, cxcv.

De libris Grammaticorum. Donatus, Pompeius, Probus. Priscianus Comminianus; Servius, Victorinus, Mar. . . . Diomedes, Verus Longinus, Taduivus, Tullius Cicero in iv. vol. Prosperi, Aratus, Sedulius, Juvencus, Epigrammata Prosperi, versus Probæ et medietas Fortunati. Quintus Serenus de Medicamentis; Fabulæ Avieni. Virgilius, Eclogæ ejusdem glossatæ. Athelmus—vita Cosmæ et Damiani metrica. Quæ sunt lib. xxvi.

De libris antiquorum, &c. Josephus plenarius: Plinius Secundus de morib. et vitâ Imperator. Epitoma Pompeii: Æthicus de mundi descriptione; Historia Homeri ubi Dictys? dicit } et Dares Phrygius, Historia Socratis

The learned Gerbert (Sylvester II.) began a better æra: the scientific knowledge he had brought back with him from Spain, though it procured for him the reputation of a magician, began to draw attention. The Arabian system of arithmetical notation, which so greatly facilitated its operations, was an encouragement to the pursuit of mathematical studies; and in the schools of learning which he founded, works of philosophy were introduced, through the me-

Sozomeni et Theodoriti. Libri Philonis Judæi. Ecc. Hist. Eusebii. Chronica Hieronymi. Historia Jordanis, &c. Omnes igitur Codices in commune faciunt numerum, ccl. et vi.

Besides the books whose titles are here given, there are only works of no note. In addition to this, we find a long list of gold and silver ornaments and possessions in land too long to recount. In the ninth century the northmen devastated the country: the monks fled, and the pirates plundered all that they had left, and burnt the monastery. After the country was delivered from them, the monks returned and re-edified a part of their church: but it was not till A. D. 981 that it was wholly repaired, and not till the middle of the eleventh century that the library was restored by a gift of *thirty-six books* from the Abbot Gervinus, and protected by the strongest anathema against any one who should venture to remove any of them; but among these we no longer find any of the ancient writers of Greece or Rome, and their place is filled up by legends of the martyrs and the like.—Spic. v. Script. Tom. ii. p. 311.

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dium of translations from the Arabic, which began to awaken once more the spirit of enquiry. As usual, that spirit at once exercised itself on the highest of all possible subjects; and metaphysics, rather than physics, appear to have claimed the largest share of consideration;* in consequence of which we find Fulbert of Chartres† very early warning his scholars against any disputations on matters which might affect

* The ignorance which prevailed among the learned at that time on all questions of physics, may be illustrated by a fact which occurred early in this century. "On the coast of Aquitaine, during three days before the feast of S. John Baptist, a rain of blood had fallen, which stained indelibly every thing on which it fell, excepting wood. The duke of Aquitaine sent to king Robert of France, begging that he would enquire of the learned of his kingdom what this phænomenon portended. The king wrote to Gauzelin of Bourges and Fulbert of Chartres, who were considered two of the most learned prelates of their time. There was no attempt to enquire into the physical cause, it was not even thought of, though it would have seemed natural to begin there. The replies of the two prelates relate merely to the question asked, and are very mysterious. They speak not as naturalists, but as historians; detail all that they had found of the kind in ancient authors, and indicate to him what they imagine it might prefigure."—Hist. Lit. de la France, tom. vii. p. 133.

† He became bishop of Chartres A. D. 1007, but continued to lecture in the schools to his death.

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their faith, and exhorting them to hold fast the ancient traditions of the church. The good prelate knew little of human nature when he gave these warnings: to forbid enquiry is to shake faith, for the truth dreads not the light; and his school produced many who were very little disposed to receive tradition unquestioned.

The spirit of enquiry which had gone forth showed itself first in a quarter where it was very little to have been expected. Leutard, a peasant of Vertus, in the canton of Chalons, began to preach a reform in the church; and "having the reputation of being a wise and religious man, made many proselytes." He threw down the crucifix and trampled upon it, averring that he acted under a divine influence, and brought scripture to justify his denial of homage to the image. But the most distasteful part of the reform preached by "this child of Satan," as he is styled by the angry monk who writes the narrative, was that of the tithes, the payment of which, he said, "was a vain practice," not at all necessary to salvation. The bishop of the diocese hearing of these things, sent for and questioned him; whereupon he defended himself by citations from scripture, "which," says the chronicler very simply, "were doubtless not

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to be found there"—a point, however, on which there may be some difference of opinion; and which at any rate proves him not to have been altogether an illiterate man. What followed we can only learn from this very prejudiced writer, who informs us that Leutard was confuted by the bishop; and finding himself forsaken by his followers, drowned himself in a well in mere despondency.

At Ravenna another, whose heresy appears to have been merely a too eager study of the Latin poets, but who probably added to this some neglect of ecclesiastical authority, was seized and condemned to death by the bishop; "and all his converts perished either by the sword or the flames." Some other heretics also "from Sardinia went over into Spain, and corrupted many; but these too were exterminated by the Catholics." * It is so much easier to burn than to confute!

The gradual declension of spiritualism in religion which had been going on for so many centuries, and the substitution of tangible and visible things for the abstractions of an intellectual faith, was but a necessary phase of the bar-

* Radulp. Glab. l. ii. c. 11, 12.

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barism in which Europe was then plunged; and the crucifix and the reliquary were but developments of that state of uncivilisation which makes the African attribute supernatural powers to his "*fetiche*," or the North American Indian to his "*medicine*." An abstract idea is too great an effort for an unschooled brain. This disposition to corporealise, which is so striking a characteristic of the untrained mind, was the root of all the corruptions of Christianity. How could the mind which had not yet learned to grasp even the simplest truths of science, grapple with the Great Truth of the universe; infinite, eternal, present every where, yet utterly incomprehensible by our senses. Such an abstraction demands the mind of a philosopher; and probably none but a philosopher will ever arrive at the point of wholly *de*-materialising his notions of the Deity. It was not wonderful, then, that step by step the material had been substituted for the immaterial in the religion of Franks and Lombards, Hungarians and Northmen: they required something to please the senses rather than to satisfy the intellect; and their religion was fashioned accordingly. Images and pictures, decorations of gems and gold, psalms sung in chorus, and splendid processions, formed the

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Christianity of the middle ages: one ordinance only remained whose simplicity it was difficult to corrupt. The humble supper of bread and wine which the fishermen of Galilee had partaken of with their Master, might indeed be served upon silver, or drunk from a golden cup enriched with precious stones; but still it was simple bread and wine, the common food of the peasant of Italy and France; and its benefits were equally simple. The believer of the apostolic age saw in it the memorial of that death which had brought life and immortality to light; hoped by a worthy participation to be fortified in running the race that was set before him; and believed that in this rite he was allowed to enter into spiritual communion with that Divine Being who had promised that where two or three were gathered together in his name, he would be there in the midst of them. The presbyter acted as proxy for the invisible Saviour, and while distributing the bread and wine among the disciples, reminded them, by repeating the words which Christ himself had used, of the circumstance thus commemorated. Nothing could be plainer or simpler; and it was soon felt to be out of keeping with the rest of the now gorgeous ritual. The graces were too spi-

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ritual to suit the mind which required a visible image for its worship; and gradually,—for all these changes were wrought slowly through many ages,—the figurative expression of the Saviour, then awaiting his death, was interpreted literally; and the spiritual participation of the supper *with* him was metamorphosed into the feeding *on* him; the officiating minister was changed into the sacrificing priest; and the one death suffered once for all, was supposed to be repeated daily on every altar in Christendom.

It was not when philosophy was beginning to revive, that a notion so repugnant even to common sense could be expected to pass unquestioned; and hardly had the actual corporeal presence of Christ's human body in the elements of the eucharist been publicly asserted, ere many voices were raised against it, which were only stilled by that most cogent of all reasoners—the executioner. Leutheric, archbishop of Sens, was accused, by the increasing party of *corporealists*, of heresy on this subject; and king Robert himself interfered to satisfy his scruples, or—to silence them. A few years later two priests of high character both for piety and learning,—for it was among such that the opponents of the popular doctrine were generally

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found,—were also accused of heretical opinions. One of them had been confessor to the queen, and was in much favour both with her and the king. A council was called at Orleans to take cognisance of the matter, and it appears from the minutes of that council, which are extant, that they there avowed their belief that the elements of the eucharist remained bread and wine even after consecration; that baptism alone could not wash away sin; that prayers to martyrs and confessors were of no avail; and that the Lord Jesus Christ was born of his parents in the ordinary way. When questioned as to why they were of this opinion, they simply replied that any other belief was repugnant to common sense. These men and their converts are termed Gnostics by the writers of that time, but apparently without any good ground; for there is nothing of the Gnostic doctrine in the opinions they avowed before the council; where, as the king and queen were both present, it was not likely that any part of the charges that could be proved would be passed over. There was also a charge of gross impurity practised in their meetings, but this was not even mentioned in the council; and we may therefore reckon it a calumny brought forward to incense the populace against

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persons whose punishment would otherwise have appeared excessive. The same charges were made by the heathens against the first Christians, and with the same view.

The object of exciting the people was attained; for the popular fury was such that these unfortunate persons would have been torn to pieces in the very church where the council was held, but for the active interference of the queen, who stood at the door, and prevented the entrance of the multitude. When, however, his opinions were avowed, even the queen forsook her former friend. What followed was characteristic of the times: she stationed herself beside the path by which he left the church, and struck at him so fiercely with the stick she held in her hand, that she tore out one of his eyes.* The two priests with their converts to the number of thirteen; —two only retracted and were spared;—were condemned to death, and the mild king Robert, who when he saw a priest in the act of stealing a candlestick would not accuse him, but advised him in private to abscond, scrupled not to order their execution, by shutting them into a wooden

* Gesta Synodi Aurelianensis anno MVII. circ. celebrata. Ap. Spicileg. Vet. Script. tom. i. p. 604.

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hut, prepared outside the city and filled with combustibles, which was then set on fire. Some of the spectators, moved to pity by the cries of those within, endeavoured to save them, but it was too late, and the whole thirteen were consumed.*

This fearful example, so far from allaying the ferment in men's minds, only drew more attention to the points in dispute: and very soon the ablest men of the different schools of learning then established in France, &c. were engaged in the controversy. Fulbert of Chartres, the stout maintainer of the corporeal presence of Christ in the eucharist, died early in the century: but his view of the subject was taken up by Lanfranc of Bec, whose fame as a philosopher was then at its height. On the other hand, Berenger, Archdeacon of Angers, and the head of the schools of Tours, which then were in high repute, and under him had reached their acme of fame, took the side of the spiritualists, as did also Bruno, bishop of Angers, and Hildebert, bishop of Mans, who were both of that school. The introduction of the writings of Aristoteles into the schools of Europe through the medium of a

* Radulph. Glab. lib. iii. c. 8.

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translation from the Arabic, about the middle of this century, gave a further impulse to philosophical inquiry; and aided that intellectual movement which gave rise to the systems now known generally by the title of scholastic philosophy. Of this, as we have seen, Johannes Scotus Erigena, the favourite of Charles the bald, may be considered as the beginner; but it had slumbered till the efforts of Gerbert, and the schools established by him, roused men's minds once more to a knowledge of their intellectual strength.

Amid the universal ignorance which prevailed during the tenth century, none probably had been at all aware of how far religious truth had been corrupted; and we may easily suppose that those who had been taught certain dogmata from their childhood, as necessary to salvation, would acquiesce in them without thinking any inquiry necessary: it is the case of the great mass of the people in all ages, be the doctrine taught them what it may. But when habits of philosophical reasoning are cultivated, and the mind is accustomed to require proof, a mere dogmatic faith can no longer be received. The intellect calls for TRUTH, and the truth of religious faith must be proved, no less than that of any

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other question of science; and this was the advantage which the early Christians had over their heathen opponents, and which they had used so triumphantly. The collision therefore between a corrupted faith, which was in opposition to every fact of history and science, and the newly born logic was inevitable; and became not a little alarming to those whose wish was, as is the case with most men, to continue in the quiet possession of their first childish prejudices on points where doubt is too painful to be endured. Lanfranc, and his scholar and successor Anselm, consequently, while entering upon the most abstruse questions, guarded, as they thought, against any danger to faith, by deciding that on such matters, if the church affirms, there is no longer any room for question *whether it be so;* but the inquiry must merely be, *why it is so.*

The rule thus attempted to be laid down, shows the honest confidence in the truth of their faith which was to be expected from men of their character: they believed what they had been taught, and expected that they should be able to prove it by their inquiries: but the subtilties by which they endeavoured to support their views were not convincing; for the broad truths of philosophy were against them; and their suc-

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cessors, who used their arguments, used them with less and less conviction of their justice; till finally it was found more convenient to forbid argument, and burn those who attempted to use it, than to have recourse to weapons which wounded those who wielded them. But he who uses authority instead of argument, has already prepared his own defeat: for even the weakest mind can see that opinions which it is dangerous to profess, must have in them something alarming to the powers that be. If then the religious faith of the people was to be guarded by penalties rather than defended by proofs of its truth, the presumption naturally was that it was more lucrative than true: this conviction forced itself very soon upon the monarchs whose authority was called in to defend the faith, and William Rufus of England, Philip of France, and Henry of Germany, laughed at ecclesiastical admonitions, made their advantage of the benefices in their gift,—and considered the clergy merely as a numerous and powerful body of men who were so tenacious of their own interests, and had gained so much influence in the nation, that it was well not to provoke them too far.

Such were the beginnings of that great move-

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ment of the human mind which led to the Reformation in the sixteenth century: but of which we have not yet seen the end, nor shall, until man has universally taken that rank in creation which his Maker intended him to occupy. We may delay by our obstinacy, but we cannot prevent the purposes of the ALMIGHTY, and HE to whom "a thousand years are as one day," will effect those purposes surely and steadily. Every century sees an advance, and blessed are those nations whose institutions are framed with a view to that great end, and who, instead of seeing in the masses of artisans and labourers of whom the chief population is composed, mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, consider them as the intellectual children of the OMNISCIENT CREATOR, over whom HE has placed governors, as tutors and guardians, to educate and fit them for the house of THEIR FATHER AND OURS.

FINIS.

C. WHITTINGHAM, TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE.

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